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THE QUEST OF THE AGES

A. EUSTACE HAYDON

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The
Quest of the Ages

By

A. EUSTACE HAYDON

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THE

QUEST OF THE AGES

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TO

EDITH

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PREFACE

WHOEVER would write of religion must give warning of his point of view. So this is to say that religion is a shared quest of the good life. Seen in longer perspective, it is the age-old, heroic adventure of earth-born man wrestling for self-fulfillment on a tiny planet swung in the vast immensities of the stars. From the high plateau of the present the ancient religions may be traced, winding their ways through the ages, threading the civilizations, living embodiments of a great hope—the hope of a good life in a good world. The fires of that hope were kindled in lowly organisms at the dawn of time. They blazed into imperious burning in man, the creator of culture. Urged by the hungering of desire and the lure of a vision, he dared to pit his will against the inexorable forces that encircled him, to fling back his challenge in the face of defeat, to chant the song of triumph even through devastated centuries. Though nature and nature's older children often made dreadful discord in his days, he was comforted by dawn-light and kindly sun and fertile earth and sweet waters. Though the paths of the primitive world were red with slaughter and cruelty, man early learned the beauty of comradeship. More important than the fierce struggle for goods were the dawning spiritual values

—mutual aid, the loyalty of friends, the tenderness of mothers, patient devotion and courage,the happiness of lovers, their eyes deep with a mystery old as the world. Expanding desire kept him restless, reaching from the good toward the better. Even amid the smoldering ruins of great civilizations human nature flowered into promise of ever nobler beauty. Great men became symbols of man's unconquerable hope—the gentle Gautama preaching the gospel of the golden mean; Confucius pleading in a disordered age for the program of peace; Socrates, numbed with hemlock, in smiling conversation with his friends; a high-souled Galilean following an ideal, unafraid, to a cross on the hill. There was disastrous failure compensated by dreams. There was anguish as actuality soothed by the opiate of illusion. Often man's vision of the ideal was fantastic, but it kept him singing at his labor. Through all the ages of futility and frustration it remained, an undying flame. The quest for the good life, for love and joy and laughter—the ancient dream—lived, until today questing man has gathered to his service knowledge and power, unimagined in all the earlier generations. The status of that quest in the modern world, set in the background of its long past, is the theme of this writing.

This interpretation of religion is built upon the findings of the religious sciences. But the term is very elusive, hence the necessity of frankly confessing a point of view. There have been, in fact, thousands of vary-

ing definitions of religion. The reason is that there is no such thing as religion in general, or in essence, or in the abstract; there are only people seeking the goods of life in ways dictated by chance, experience, and environment. It is easily possible, therefore, to impose a purely arbitrary definition upon the materials by selecting from the thick complex of facts only those which fit the definition, and denying the name of religion to those which refuse to conform. A familiar illustration is the identification of religion with supernaturalism and other-worldliness made by Western writers reared in the Christian tradition. Even when the scientific student decides to be purely objective and empirical, and to formulate his definition only after a careful historical study of scores of religions, he is faced with the same problem of selection, for there are no signposts along the paths of the evolution of cultures differentiating religion from the total complex of the moving process of social life. Yet such an empirical study contributes greatly to clarification. It eliminates narrow, subjective, and prejudiced interpretations. It shows whatever is taken as religion flowing into altered forms and creating new embodiments of thought and cult in relation to the problems of changing social situations. Whatever else it may or may not be, religion cannot be separated from its deep rooting in the social life of man.

But the problem of definition is not so desperate as it once seemed to be. Workers in the religious sci-

ences are drawing together in their conclusions. Certain outstanding characteristics come into the clear light. One thing is fundamental in religions—the creative drive of human desires for satisfying values. But it also appears that there are no peculiarly religious values. Politics, industry, science, education, morality, art, may be specialized patterns of behavior aiming at satisfactions which may be, to some degree, differentiated. Religion includes them all in a synthesis of the ideal of the good life, challenges all subsidiary techniques to loyalty, and judges them in the light of their service to the group ideal. Religion is inclusive in another sense. It demands the right of every member of the group to a full share in the socially approved values. Often the group was narrow, or the conditions of participation so arduous that only an elect few could claim the boon, but theoretically the way was open to all. Universal religions threw open the gates to the ideal goal for all mankind. When religions were defeated in the hope of winning the perfect life on earth and postponed it to a future age or another world, the teaching and the technique appeared sometimes to be dissociated from the practical life, but the ideal was always in terms of the highest human values. Finally, religions have been irrepressibly optimistic. They read the human quest for perfect happiness as the thread of purposive meaning in the time-world, as the goal of history, and put the ultimate power of the universe

—whether gods or Absolutes or Law—under constraint to guarantee the fulfillment of man's hope.

Taken thus naturalistically, the religions of the world may be understood as the manifold ways in which human life has sought to mold a cosmic process to the service of man's growing ideal. The living heart of every one of them was the quest for the values of the good life to be enjoyed by all. Other phases of religion were always incidental to this. Age after age the drift of time made world-view, technique, and ideal obsolete in the various religions, but the quest continued. Like a beacon, it led the pilgrimage of the peoples until they emerged into the full daylight of the modern world. Religions are now entering upon the greatest transformation of all their long history. This essay is an attempt at interpretation. It may be read as a modest effort to formulate a philosophy of religion out of the materials of the natural, social, and religious sciences.

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THE QUEST OF THE AGES

Chapter One

THE QUEST

ALL life is a questing. The drive of living organisms for satisfactions is the key to understanding of our world drama. Man was a late comer on the stage. When he first emerged through the dawn shadows with wonder in his eyes, he had climbed to his high status upon the hard-earned experience of innumerable living forms. Heir of the ages, he began his long march toward mastery of the planet. The record is blurred. Much has been lost in the drift of a thousand centuries but enough remains to reveal heroic wrestling with the dangers of an untamed nature, the achievement of skills, and the enlargement of desires and power through social coöperation. Yet disaster, defeat and death walked the ways of that early world. Simply to live was a problem. The winning of the satisfactions of the elemental needs of life was man's central interest. In that shared quest for the values of a satisfying life is the motif which has molded all the religions of mankind.

There is no dark mystery about religion. Mystery enough there was in the world for the man who made the religions of the past, but religion itself was never

a mystery. It was a practical and prescribed way of behavior; the safe way of living. It had its roots in the rich soil of natural, human hungerings. Often the towering figures of the gods loom so large as to obscure the main action of the play. But to those who know the nature of our human quest it seems most natural that all the early religions of the race should center about the basic values of living. They are concerned with the winning of food, shelter, security and protection from danger. They deal with the strange phenomena of birth, the relation of the sexes, sickness, death and the care of the dead. All the ceremonies and practical techniques of early religions are oriented about these interests. They vary with the type of life of the group. Agricultural peoples are interested in the fertility of the soil, in the very necessary rain, in the fructifying warmth of the sun. Their ceremonies, then, are directed toward securing prosperity and abundant food supply through the control of these phases of their natural world. They deal with plowing, magical technique to stimulate the seed, fertility ceremonies in the fields, methods for making their sprouting grain grow tall, rituals for bringing rain, protective rites to ward off the danger of blight, cautious rituals at the opening of harvest. Among all peoples the coming of new life in the springtime is marked by festivals of joy and gladness symbolized sometimes by a battle of the life powers over the powers of death. In the autumn when the sun seems to be losing its strength and death

lays its chill hand upon all living things, there are ceremonies to give new life to the sun, and new energy to the dying earth. All these forms of the cult are born in emotion. They are charged with the desperate necessity of winning in some manner the means of sustaining life. All of it is a blind, groping effort of people bound to the soil, bravely battling for security on a planet that is none too friendly to man. Pastoral groups, hunting groups each have their own peculiar differentia in religious practice. For those who live by the sea the animals and dangers of the deep are important. Peoples in the dark, fear-haunted jungles have all their customs colored by the necessity of coming to terms with the prowling dangers of the forest deeps.

While no religion ever had its origin in fear, early man knew the necessity of caution. His technique of protection makes up a manifold armory of amulet, spell, charm, incantation, words and rites of power. Man early learned the values of mutual aid. The social control of the group over the individual gave sanctity to the relation of the sexes, to loyalty, and to the virtues necessary for the maintenance of group life. On this shrine the fire of spiritual values was first kindled. The tangled system of social custom and ceremonial magic with which the life of early man is enwrapt constitutes an established working relationship with the natural and social environment. The one permanent and controlling thing which runs through and shapes every religion is the restless questing of the

life of man, of hungering, groping, hoping, human life, trying to make a home in the world.

Man found helpers in his struggle. They were the gods. In the morning of our human story gods were not vague figures dwelling in the unseen, but real. They were the actual powers of the environing nature-world, with welcome kindly presence, coöperating with man in the realization of his desired values. It would be a mistake to think of early man as a theologian, or to represent him as having clear-cut, intellectual concepts of the gods. As is natural in relation to a benefactor, his reaction was largely emotional. The gods owe their existence to the fact that at a time of need, or anxiety, or emotional strain, their activity brought the much-desired relief. To say that "gods are not so much believed in as used" is true; but it is also true that the gods came into being because they were useful. It is natural therefore to find the sun, the fertile earth, the dawn-light, the rain, and especially the storm-rain playing the rôle of gods. The stress is variable, but human interest always dictates that stress.

For nomadic peoples the heavenly sky-power, giver of light, warmth, and rain was all-important. Settled agricultural people were more closely bound to the earth-mother, giver of the goods of life. Some of these emotional attitudes we may still feel—the joy of spring, the witchery of a quiet night under a full moon, the fresh beauty of early dawn. We may share the emo-

tional release of nomad watchers of the flocks, when, after the cold and dangers of the night, the lovely dawn-maiden threw back the curtains of darkness and poured over the world the warm light of a new day, driving the wild animals to their lairs and calling man to labor and to enjoy. The dawn was always a goddess.

The storm-power wielding the lightning-bolt and terrible thunder was naturally a warrior, but because such storms released the rains after periods of drought, the god was always beneficent. When the Vedic Aryans moved from the northern highlands into the Punjab they came to a land where intense heat and drought threatened the values of life. After weary rainless months all nature, animal and human, seemed to plead for relief but rain did not come. Men anxiously scanned the heavens for the coming of the "cows of the clouds." Then one day there appeared moving from the Himalayas the dark rolling herds of the rain, and round about them the black, writhing, twisting, sinuous body of the dragon Vritra. By this evil power the clouds were herded back to the hills. Another day and again the promise of rain melted back into the high mountains, leaving the earth parched and dying. When still once more the demon of drought threatened to drive away the clouds, suddenly there flashed the terrific lightning-bolt, the world shook with the roar of the thunder and the waters came pouring in torrents over the grateful lands. Indra, giver of rain, con-

queror of the demon, was the best beloved of all the gods, dearest to the farmer and herdsman. In some such way the gods of the early world played their useful part. In some such way too, they were the objects of gratitude and very real to the consciousness of man. In times of the greatest need and frustration he learned more and more to depend upon these strong helpers of the outer world.

All religions are complex, but since they are functions of the life process of a human group, all the elements that enter into any religion have some bearing upon the values central to the group ideal of living. It is possible to speak of three phases of the religious complex: the ideal of the satisfying life, the technique, practical and ceremonial, through which the values are won, and the extra-human powers which help or hinder in the quest. That is to say, a religion has an ideal, a cult or ceremonial and a theology. And the history of any religion might be written by following any one of these threads. The driving force always is in the life hunger of earth-oriented men and women.

One thing of great importance should be noted: that always side by side with and yet inseparable from the technique of magic and ceremonial, early man had a practical method of winning his desired goods. The agriculturalists planted their fields with elaborate ritual, but they always planted them. The hunter and warrior could never neglect the ceremonial of dance

and spell, but neither did they neglect their weapons and the arts of fighting. The South Sea Islanders built their fishing craft with careful rituals, but also with knowledge of the exact adaptation of means to ends. This blending of the practical and matter-of-fact use of knowledge and the magical-social ceremonial into a single unit was characteristic of early religions. The two were inseparable phases of a single complex. It was the rapid enlargement of the effective, practical means of achieving desired goals that created in later centuries the gulf between the world of everyday and the realm of the unseen. A dualism of sacred and secular appeared. The effective technique was divorced from the social magic of cult and prayer. It was the dismal failure of man to find the good life on earth, which in centuries long past gave primary importance to the compensatory unseen world of wish and ideal. A dualism was established in most religions long before man had won anywhere an adequate mastery of his world.

With the religions of culture came disillusion. Primitive man was satisfied to win the simple material satisfactions of life, but culture man, with his larger knowledge and better tools, made demands upon his world for much more subtle satisfactions. He had discovered the realm of spiritual values, the values of happy, human relationships. He wanted not only to live, but to live joyously. Now justice, love, friendship, loyalty, the pleasures and beauties of social life, were goods to

be preferred above all material rewards or the brute fulfillment of physical needs. The ideal was exalted. The religious quest turned toward the realization of a social order in which these values of the higher life might be embodied. The pathos of the failure of that hope has left its mark upon all the religions of the world.

There were many early promises of success. Earth yielded her resources to the new tools of culture. Agriculture furnished a solid basis of material wealth. Firmly compacted racial groups built the ancient empires. With them came the kings, the nobility, the priestly potentates—an aristocracy which gathered into its own hands and appropriated to its own service the fruits of the common toil. Glorious promise was here presented of the possibility of human achievement when given unified direction, if only it could once be captured by the ideal of a shared life. On the somber background of the ages are flung these flaming torches of splendor—the massive grandeur of Egypt, Persian glory, Grecian magnificence. India and China also knew the same chapter of aristocratic brilliance and pride of mastery. Failure waited for them all. Empire followed empire into oblivion. To all succeeding generations these ancient glories appear as momentary gleams of unequaled beauty, passing glimpses of human capacity, glimmerings of an ideal sunk and lost again in the dismal wastes where the suffering children of men wander, still seeking joy and peace. In

every age was the fatal defect, a lack of knowledge to clarify and give embodiment to the human quest. Man had no adequate understanding of human nature, no method of human control, no science with which to master himself, his social organization, or the world of nature. Prophet and seer stood amid the wreckage age after age and proclaimed again the ideal of a world ruled by righteousness, love, and peace; but neither they nor their hearers knew how the ideal social order might be actualized. The dream remained as a splendid beacon awakening in the spirits of men the hope of a joyous home in the world; but repeated failure bit into the heart like acid. The lament is in the sacred literatures of all lands.

Religions are always tempered and molded under the hammer of human experience. Through the maze of human problems, life is ever questing for the good and the better. Even in the ruins of defeat religion rebuilds the shattered hopes and points the way toward the ideal; for the hunger of life will not be denied. Yet with the shadow of defeat darkening the highways of civilization a change came over the religions of the world. Gone now was the naïve attitude toward the world of nature. Though his eyes were lifted to the far horizon, it is to the eternal glory of the heroic spirit of man that in spite of the failure of civilizations and the heart-sickness of age-long discouragement he refused to abandon his vision of the good life. Crushed by the bludgeoning of sinister forces of uncontrolled

evil, mocked by time, he still dared to believe that somehow, sometime, somewhere the good life in a good world might be realized. He kept his dream, but postponed its fulfillment. Not in this world and not by feeble human power might the goal be won. It was projected, either into some future age or into the realm beyond the gates of death. Sometimes there was the expectation of the coming of a Messianic figure to usher in the kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace on earth; sometimes there was the hope of a divinely ordained prophet who would bring to an end the world of sin and evil and herald the coming of a new heaven and a new earth; sometimes the goal was beyond this world in an immortal heaven-realm; sometimes the flight was farther still, not only beyond this earth, but also beyond heaven to an ineffable existence of eternal bliss.

Whether we describe this radical transformation in religions as an heroic loyalty to ideals or as "a failure of nerve," we must face the fact that the great religions with but one or two exceptions have for sometimes thousands of years been cast in this mold. The background was the reality of failure. Human hopes and hungerings outran human powers. Religion, embodying the quest for the satisfying life, turned its back upon this world. It is impossible now to know what emotions moved in the breasts of the vast unknown multitudes who age after age bore the burden of real life—marched, builded, toiled, and died. Perhaps to

them the actualities of the everyday life were always more important than any far-off ideal. Only a few sensitive souls became vocal. The ever-recurring refrain of their message was the transiency of all earthly things, the tragedy of human effort beaten down by the overwhelming forces of evil, the weakness of man's best strength. Only because we have become accustomed to the lament and are familiar with the building of a compensatory world of hope on the ruins of the actual are we not startled to find in almost all lands, down all the centuries, the same pathos—a sense of sin, of failure, of helplessness, of the worthlessness of the world and the futility of life. Yet it was always the joy of beautiful living for which man sought. There are no visions of millennium eras, no future paradises, no realms of immortal life that are not ideal projections of an existence where human life may find perfection and bliss. In some such way over all the world man clung to his dream even at the risk of losing the world.

With the postponement of the hope of realizing the good life the most important phases of the religious technique came to be those which guaranteed to man a share in the future kingdom. The old established folk-ways of family and community life remained. The seasonal ceremonies tended to take on new meaning in the light of the new ideal. Even the group sanction of the moral life, so important as an element in religions of frank this-worldliness, became a sec-

ondary thing when the gaze was on the far future or the other world. Asceticism, world-denial, and world-flight seemed natural as aids to escape. It is true that a few brave spirits, such as the Epicureans of classic Greece, the Charvakas of ancient India, men like Yang Chu of China, continued to say "yes" to life and threw a laughing challenge to the world. Most men sought guaranties of eternal salvation.

Each religion had its own peculiar emphasis determined by the attitude and thought patterns of long-past centuries, but all of them gave secure leading to the questing soul. Salvation by works, salvation by knowledge, salvation by faith, many methods adapted to the capacity of individuals, opened the gates to the land of promised bliss. It may not be without significance that salvation was mediated in this stage to the individual rather than the group. The new stress on immortality was the cause. In the early centuries of their history the religions of Israel, of Greece, of China, had no place for interest in the continuity of the individual. It was enough that a man lived his life fully and that continuity of existence should belong to clan or family or nation. But with the fading of the vision of a happy human society and the quest for life in an after-world or an after-age, each man must walk the pathway alone. The most important function of religion then seemed to be its special technique of revealed wisdom or magical rite, through which salvation might be won.

The change in the goal of the good life affected the gods also. Long before the religious quest was touched with world-flight the old, near-at-hand gods of early religion had withdrawn as spiritual beings into the invisible. With the increasing helplessness of man these unseen friends grew ever more powerful. Since the gods were good and were helpers of man, they were soon loaded with the unfulfilled wishes of mankind. The divine supernatural realm became the home of truth, of beauty, of goodness, of the ideal. On this background we must read not only the meaning of salvation programs, but the interpretation of life given to us in the theologies and world-denying metaphysics. All the typical theologies and philosophies of the great culture religions reflect this dualism—on the one hand, the concrete plane of human living, and on the other the deeper, perfect reality above, behind or within it.

Sometimes, as in the Sankhya system and the religion of the Jains, the old gods were neglected or denied, but only because they were helpless to save man from the weary wheel of samsara, and blissful reality was beyond the wheel. In the same way, early Buddhism ignored the gods in quest of the peace of Nirvana which neither the joys of this world nor the heaven of the gods could give. In theistic religions, one great god bore the whole burden of the world. He was the first and final cause. Evil did not threaten belief in his goodness only because in some inscrutable way his will guaranteed eternal perfection and happiness at the

last. When, as often happened, thought pushed beyond all personal gods to an impersonal or super-personal absolute it was only to find there the final perfection, the eternal harmony. Everywhere religious philosophy abandoned the task of mastering the world, to seek beyond this apparently futile and useless span of time an eternal reality, an ultimate destiny, a firm and stable cosmic will, a supreme One guaranteeing the everlasting security and ultimate triumph of the values precious to the human heart.

Seen in the perspective of thousands of years of the history of religions, this seems at first glance to be a strange and pathetic refusal to face life. To the eye of understanding, watching the shifting scenes of the historic process, it is not strange. The desire-driven spirit of man refused to be denied; but evil and frustration were facts of this world. The unseen world then must needs be the realm of truth and joy, the home of the heart's desire. And Kant's islanders knew that a "must be" is stronger than an "is." For centuries wise philosophers and mystic saints have been willing to believe and to defend the belief that the transcendent and spiritual world is more real than the world of sense and time. So the weary search of man for a homeland, the long labor in which the sons of earth have been engaged throughout the ages in the effort to wrest a good and worthful life from a reluctant planet, came at last to be read in terms of theology, of ideas of the supernatural, of beliefs re-

garding another world. The earthly and human significance of religion as a shared quest for the values of the good life was obscured.

Viewed over too brief a span of time, it would be easy to confuse the creative, driving power of religion with one of its local or temporal embodiments. There have been thousands of varying forms of theology, of cult, of institution through which the living current of restless human questing has flowed during the centuries. Not in church or temple, mosque or pagoda, is enshrined the heart of religion. Not in sacrament or ceremony, philosophy or creed, is the singing soul of it. All these things were vestments, magnificent, memory-mellowed vestments, embodying for a time the deep aspirations of religion, and then, in the change and drift of life, outgrown and discarded.

The creative religious forces of every age are where the masses of common folk are toiling together with aching shoulders at the problems of life; where stout-hearted men and anxious women, sheltering wide-eyed little children, seek still the ancient goal—the joy of living—despite all the discouragement and tragedy of an inhospitable, uncontrolled environment. Where humanity, baffled and broken, yet with hope ever renewed, battles still for fulfillment, there is living religion. For life refuses to be conquered. Surely it is not without profound meaning that almost all the great prophets, reformers, and seers of the religions of the world have taken their places close to the earth as

champions of the cause of the lowly, of the struggling, suffering, neglected, multitude. With their feet firmly planted in the midst of the folk, they proclaimed the gospel of delivery for the captives, the opening of prisons for them that are bound. They preached glad tidings to the poor, to the diseased, to the outcast and oppressed, an opportunity for new life to the discouraged, a surcease from pain for the weary and heavy laden. Religion is there, where burns the eternal fire of an irrepressible human hope; where man wrestles with the world and seeks unceasingly for life in happy perfection. The débris of dead cults and institutions litters the highways of the past. Creative change is in the social life of man, demanding ever more satisfying embodiment. Civilizations come and pass; religion, driven by life hunger, quests ever for complete fulfillment.

It would be wildly optimistic to say that our age has climbed to the mountain-top of self-consciousness and is now capable of viewing religions in perspective as a human venture on a cosmic scale. Few, perhaps, are sufficiently detached to see the devious paths of the historic religions, winding through the centuries with their complexities of creed and cult, all converging toward the same goal—the achievement of a good life in a good world. If this were realized there would be hope that modern knowledge and skill might be harnessed by intelligence to actualize the vision. But in

the complexity of modern life even the wisest leaders are bewildered.

There are many reasons for the hesitancy of the religious quest of today. Of these not least is the narrow meaning given by the Western World to the term "religion" itself. For multitudes it undoubtedly is synonymous with denomination or church. For many it means simply Christianity. Some would define it as divinely revealed truth, guaranteed by authority, leading safely to salvation. The inertia of centuries is here. The historic view, that all religions are products of social living and that all truth is hammered out on the anvil of human experience, is difficult doctrine for such as these.

Still more disconcerting is the fact that scientist and philosopher so often agree with the narrow sectarian in the naïve identification of religion with the theology of supernaturalism. The long stress upon religion as "truth" and "belief" has obscured the longer vision of religion as a way of living. It is discouraging, but the reason is clear. It is thus that Christianity as a living religion pays the penalty for its crystallization into a rigid orthodoxy of creed and institution. Not since the thirteenth century has there been in Christendom a synthesis of life under the guidance of religious idealism. With the dawn of the modern world, one after another of the great domains of human activity and interest consciously won emancipation from a Church which refused any longer to change. Science,

philosophy, politics, business, education, art one by one plunged into the current of the new life until men everywhere came to be conscious of a separation between these phases of life and religion. Yet in the patterns of these social activities the weal or woe of men living in this world was woven. Religion was felt to be something apart, an affair largely of the other world. It is small consolation now to understand the process. The consequences are disastrous. Religion failed to give orientation to the life process. There was no guide to formulate the ideal of social values, to synthesize knowledge and power in the service of a social ideal. Science, politics, and business created our modern civilization, but without any unifying control of social idealism or loyalty to the values of the higher life. Man has been marvelously enriched in goods, but the good life for the children of men still remains a dream.

The endless complexity of modern civilization adds to our perplexity. The new science has transformed the whole significance of earthly life for man. It has given him power over the material world beyond even the most fabulous dreams of the past. Steam, electricity, means of swift communication, have so conquered space and time that the problems of every little nation become world problems. Sleeping cultures of Oriental lands awaken, startled to find themselves in the steel grip of machines thousands of miles away. A power-driven civilization has settled itself down over

all the world, changing the old conditions of life, altering the habits and hopes and needs of men, multiplying and intensifying problems. Like a fairy godmother, science has put into the hands of man the magic wand—a marvelous technique of control over nature. The powers of earth and air and ocean bow obediently to the human will. But the gift avails nothing until all this power and knowledge is moralized, humanized, and made safe for culture.

Mere material mastery may mean only tragedy. The science which harnesses physical nature may also create engines capable, under the direction of a selfish will, of destroying the life of a people. The multiplication and perfection of machines may save men from the drudgery of labor and at the same time crush human hope. In the midst of a plethora of production the more perfect machines may crowd the displaced worker out of any share in the goods of life. Sciences which have learned to quiet pain and minister kindly healing to the body of man have created also the dark threat of poison gas. Knowledge, serving technology, which develops the resources of the earth, may put into the hands of a ruthless few control over the lives of millions of their fellows, hurl nation against nation in a bloody turmoil, devastate the earth with war. There is a cruel irony in the fact that an age most able to satisfy the wishes of man should lack the synthesis of the religious vision; that the civilization which has so swiftly developed the modern instruments of

practical control should also have allowed economic and political organizations to escape responsibility to the human ideal.

Through the ages man's greatest problem has been the lack of tools, the inadequacy of his power of mastery over the world. Out of this helplessness came his flight to compensatory other-worlds. All that is changed. The contrast between the old and new technique is startling. It is a very long way from a charm, a spoken exorcism, a few words pronounced with passion and hurled against invisible powers of sickness, to medical science diagnosing and prescribing a cure. There is a vast difference in mastery between the method of an Arval Brotherhood moving with dignity around a Roman field, or of Russian peasants bearing icons and chanting prayers in procession around the standing grain to secure safety for the crops, and that of modern agricultural scientists who study the soil, feed it, and plan scientifically for a harvest. So completely has the primitive technique of spell and rite and prayer been superseded by effective scientific methods that those who are accustomed to think of religion in terms of the pre-scientific ceremonies and ideas are convinced that religion may be dismissed as "superstition," an interesting relic of a dying past. There could be no clearer evidence of the lamentable fact that our religious quest has failed to harness the new technique of science to the winning of shared values in a common life. Material mastery and

scientific knowledge we do not lack. Every year heaps up new resources of mechanical efficiency and technological complexity. Our difficulty lies elsewhere and it is plain enough. It is the necessity of understanding and directing the wishes of man in society, of orienting our powers toward a worth-while goal. Our problem is to summon sufficient intelligence and good will to develop a social order in which the creative energies of men will find their glory in the achievement of spiritual values, of an ever more richly satisfying life for the race. This is to take up the time-hallowed task of man, the religious quest of the ages.

Perspective is often difficult. Hemmed in by the limitations of particular religious forms and ideas, it is not a simple matter to see how all the religions of the world have been made and remade, age after age, in man's search for the good life. Few of us are yet able to adjust ourselves, either in thought or in emotion, to the modern meaning of the ancient quest. In the Orient and in the West alike the gulf grows ever wider between the traditional theologies and the thought-forms growing out of scientific knowledge; between the salvation ideals of the past and the ideals emerging in the practical life of modern society. Most pathetic is the swarm of fantastic cults, ministering to and exploiting the bewilderment and heart-hunger of our period of transition. Though emotional loyalties pull toward the past, it is useless to hope that the structures of a pre-scientific age can embody the spirit-

ual life of the new day with its immense enlargement of knowledge and aspiration. It is useless to take refuge in mystical obscurantism. This is not the first age in history that has demanded courage and creative power to rebuild an outgrown faith, though it is perhaps the most challenging. Modern man must grapple fearlessly with his problems and, in the light of his vision of the truth and the task, formulate a religious ideal and program which will command loyal coöperation and inspire hope. Is it too much to believe that humanity, conscious at last of the goal toward which the scattered races have been blindly straining, may find the leadership which will point the way to the good life?

That ideal and program will deal with the issues of life—the economic basis of living, the social forces which shape and control the individual, the evils of a still uncontrolled material environment, and the evils resulting from the faulty, human, social organization. No vital religious program can be separated from the life interests and needs of the folk. Final answers to ultimate questions may wait. There may be no answer. Too much time has been wasted in the effort to make appear logical pre-scientific ideas that were created in the fires of living, born of desire, and never were logical. There are more important problems than the untangling of philosophical enigmas. Whatever unknown mysteries may be hidden in those far-off lonely spaces where the stars wander silently in the

unplumbed deeps, it is certain that man's task is here, man's duty is here on this little planet so insignificant in all that vastness. Here, at any rate, a cosmic process has come alive, has risen to consciousness and personality. Here has emerged the social structure through which the achieved values of the ages are transmitted to each new generation, through which the natural resources of the earth are mediated to the individual and which is the controlling factor in determining his opportunity for life, his development, his joys and sufferings, his hopes, and his ideals. In the perfecting of this social organization that all may share the racial heritage of spiritual values and know the joy of creative living is the task of modern religion.

And all the great religions of the world are on the move. To those who are accustomed to think of religion as dealing with unchanging truth and authoritative revelation it may at first seem strange that old world-views are being discarded, obsolete programs abandoned, and ideals sacred to the past gently laid aside. But when it is once realized that all religions are the product of life, it would be remarkable indeed if in this age there were not radical changes. All living religions have always been changing religions because a vital religion moves with the changing problems of a social group. A living religion is a way of living. Only when they have no meaning for life in the hurly-burly of the moving world can religions remain static. That religious leaders should deliberately under-

take to direct the future evolution of religions in the quest for the good life follows naturally from this functional point of view.

It follows also that there can be no dogmatism, no absolute assurance. The age of finalities and panaceas is over for thoughtful religious men. Word solutions of practical problems, religious systems woven from wishes and dreams, though they are plentiful enough still, no longer can carry conviction. Yet there seems to be a reasonable hope that a generation equipped with the power of modern technique, fortified by modern knowledge, made patient and tolerant by the scientific spirit and at the same time consecrated to the religious ideal, might remake the social structure of the planet a little nearer to the heart's desire.

There are immense assets in the capacity of man for love and friendship, loyalty and devotion, self-sacrificing labor and complete abandonment, even unto death, for a cause. There are untold resources in the sheer physical control over the earth by science and the machines daily created by science. The dawn of the better day will come, not suddenly by the release of any magic spring, but because man has at last assumed the intelligent ordering of life with the determination to put conscious purpose into the future development of human institutions. It will come, if ever, by the scientific analysis of problems to discover the roots of evil. Only by this method may man deal efficiently with the problems of poverty, injustice, vice,

war, the strife of classes, the rivalries of nations. All are maladjustments in the social-economic organism and demand laborious piecemeal solutions. The religious man, worker or artist, statesman or scientist, will be he who acts as a coöperating unit in this common task, who consecrates brain and energy to this human quest for fulfillment of life.

The dawn will be near when the machines are at last freed from the grip of greed and subjected to the beautifying of life; when a new educational science shall develop the individual to full capacity for cooperative service and make him a thinker capable of dealing with facts; when a new organization of society shall so distribute the resources of the earth as to give to every last, lonely child of man at least a free opportunity for release of all his powers. Tens of thousands of creative spirits now submerged and lost may then arise to continue the task.

Is the hope too daring? After all the weary centuries, is the march of mankind in the ranks of the world religions to break into the sunlight of triumph at last in the age of science? Or is this heroic flight of the spirit of man toward the good life only a beautiful gesture, a tragic episode, doomed from the beginning to end in defeat? So often have religions come to a halt in despair and disillusion that there is no lack of voices to mock the dreamer of dreams. World-denying theologies and world-transcending philosophies seem to smile in sad pity that anyone should again

dream of a beautiful earthly home for man. Cynics scoff, talking the language of theology in their distrust of human nature. Worse still, many intellectuals threaten to desert the cause. There is a new kind of "failure of nerve," a feeling of futility in the presence of the endless complexity of the problems of modern life. For many the fires of enthusiasm are damped by the bitter experience of the inertia of traditional religions.

In spite of all, the balances are weighted heavily on the side of hope. Over all the world today the leaders of the great religions are thinking the same thoughts and turning their faces toward the same ideals. They see the world and life through the eyes of the same science and they wrestle with the same world problems. There is a recognition of the solidarity of the race. They realize now that no one race or religion can save the world. Since religion is a way of life and all races are now entangled in the maze of common problems, the realization of a world made hospitable to the higher values must be the result of the united labors of all the religions of mankind. An observer from the mountain-top of the ages might prophesy the beginning of the triumph of the age-old quest.

Many and manifold have been the forms of religion. The religious quest has been one. That quest for the values of the noblest ideal of living our own age takes up again. No generation was ever so well-equipped

for the task. Scientific method, material wealth, the insight of the social sciences, the incalculable energies of the machines, the cultural heritage of the past—all may serve for the glorification of life. Religion must make the synthesis. From of old, religions have dared to challenge the universe with the demand for life made perfect. An unfaltering loyalty to the old-new vision may yet win for earth's multitudes the joy of living.

Chapter Two

UNIVERSES, OLD AND NEW

EARLY man was not troubled by the riddle of cosmic origins. His was a time of more elemental hungerings. Life was far too dangerous and simple existence too precarious to give leisure for speculation. His religion dealt with the insistent issues of the everyday world. After all, cosmology is a luxury, not a necessity. All theories regarding the beginning and structure of the world are therefore relatively late.

It is probable that primitive man was so close to the natural world about him as scarcely to differentiate himself from it. There may be some truth in the old idea that he was wrapped by safe custom in a kind of nature mysticism; that he felt, rather than thought, himself a part of the world. His emotional relations to heaven and earth, to sun and moon and dawn, were earlier, and always continued to be more vital than any theories concerning the nature of the world.

All the historic religions, however, have their cosmologies. How did heaven and earth come into existence? What are the divisions of the earth and its ultimate constituents? What is the place of man in

the universe? Answers to these questions, often confused and contradictory, enter into the religious world-view of every group. They are embodied in sacred scripture and sometimes in creedal confessions. As human creations, they have deep underlying similarities the world over but there is endless variety of detail. Of all the phases of religious thinking, this is one of the most picturesque and colorful.

At no point are the ancient ideas so greatly at variance with the modern knowledge. The natural sciences have conquered this area, and few are interested to defend as truth the naïve speculations of the past. Even such mild apology as "The Scriptures are not to tell us how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven," would seem amusing today. Consequently, we are able to enter with detached understanding into these pre-scientific theories, to treat them as interesting answers to the questions which modern man solves in a more adequate, if not in a more ultimate, way. It is certain that all of these cosmic theories have been taken much more seriously by later generations than by their authors. A genuine appreciation of them was not possible so long as they were accepted as revealed truth. When they take their place as early stages of an effort to understand the place of man in his world, modern man, who is still engaged in the same search for knowledge, may feel a sympathetic comradeship with his unknown forerunners. He knows that his knowledge in its turn is not the final word.

The earliest systems of cosmology were built of simple materials, reflecting the relations of man to particular geographic and natural environments. The primitive thinker read the world process in the patterns of his own activity. As man worked with materials, so the creating gods worked on a grander scale. It was not always an anthropomorphic divine figure that was the actor. Sometimes, as in North American groups, the making or remaking of the world was the work of animals of remarkable powers—the coyote, the raven, or the hare. These beings, nevertheless, were always infused with human qualities. Usually the world-maker was a god. Thus Ptah, the artisan, at Memphis, shaped and carved the world; or Khnum, the potter, at Elephantine, molded the world on his wheel. This is speculation naïve but natural.

The idea of generation also served. From the beginning, the two great realities ever present for man were the earth and the over-arching heaven. For some peoples there was also the sea. The earth they knew as the fertile mother. From the heavens came the fructifying forces of warmth and rain. Father Heaven and Mother Earth might then be the original sources of all existing things. This was a very common motif. The classic illustration is in Japan, where Izanagi and Izanami were the parents of the earth islands and of all the later gods. There is a variant suggestion in ancient Babylonia of the origin of all things from the union of the two great primeval waters.

Human behavior was the model, though the actors were vastly more powerful than man. Almost without exception the gods worked with preëxisting material. The idea of creation out of nothing is a late Christian conception. Their task was to make a cosmos out of chaos. Perhaps the best symbol of chaos known to early man was the restless, untamed sea. The characteristic Semitic cosmology began with this. They knew the life-giving river waters, but there was also the sea, the vast, destructive Tiamat, older than the gods. The chief of the gods conquered Tiamat. Using the power of the wind, he split the monster into two parts and stabilized the habitable world. One half of the waters was lifted above the firmament; the other was placed beneath the earth and the fresh waters. The Hebrew story refined and added details to this scheme, giving the accepted world-picture for long centuries of Hebrew-Christian history. Egypt knew also a primal chaos of waters before the beginning of "earth or heaven or man or gods or death." For them also there was an ocean beneath the world and a heavenly ocean on which the sun and moon and stars sailed in ships day and night. Blue waters and blue sky may have given the simple suggestion that above and below there was the same element.

Life springing from an egg was familiar and yet remarkable. It intrigued the imaginative thinker in search of origins. Perhaps the Creator of the world emerged at the beginning from a cosmic egg floating

upon the abyss of waters. This idea appears in Egypt, in India, and in Greece. The Orphics taught that Space and Time and Æther were the original existences and that Time formed the Cosmic Egg, silver white, from the other two. From the egg came the creator of night and heaven, earth and gods, sun, moon, animals, and man. The cosmology of Hesiod also began with Chaos, the yawning mouth of empty Space. The gods came later. Abstract thinking was beginning to replace the naïve imagery of an earlier day.

There was still another possible theory of beginnings for primitive man. He knew the magic potency of the word. Much of his religious technique consisted in these words of power. Names were things and to name was to control. So in Egypt, Thoth spoke the world into being. In a later form of the Hebrew creation story, Jahweh also used the word of power for the organization of the preëxisting chaos.

Zoroastrianism, in its popular cosmology, traced the origin of the universe to creative power to but two creators, one good and the other evil, working through four periods of three thousand years each. The Wise Lord, Ormazd, planned a perfect world poised between the realms of light and darkness. He created only good things. The order of creation was heaven, stars, waters, land, plants, animals, and man. Unfortunately, Ahriman injected into the scheme his evil creations, and the universe became a field of battle. All existing things in the world we know will be, till the end of time,

enrolled in the conflict between the good and the evil. And Ormazd will ultimately prevail. After the long turmoil, the glorious God, triumphant, will fashion his perfect world forever free from evil. The reflection of the geographic and social situation of the Iranian people is in this picture. Later, they too, pushed on beyond the creating gods to an abstraction, Boundless Time, as the ultimate source of all.

Allied to the Zoroastrian are the Gnostic and Manichæan systems which began with original separate realms of light and darkness. The creation of the world was a calamity, for the divine light was imprisoned in earthly bodies. The Creator was an enemy of God and man. A spark of the celestial light, the soul of man is always dimly conscious of the lost homeland and seeks longingly to return to the realm of light. Three adversaries torment the soul on its homeward flight—the world, the flesh, and the devil.

With the coming of philosophy there was a tendency in the lands of the East not only to place the gods on this side of the beginning of the world, but to make the ultimate existence and nature of the world independent of them. The so-called "Creation Hymn" of the tenth book of the Rig-Veda is an excellent example of this early drift. Kaegi's translation reads:

> "Then there was neither being nor not-being.
> The atmosphere was not, nor sky above it.
> What covered all? And where? by what protected?
> Was there the fathomless abyss of waters?

"Then neither death nor deathlessness existed;
Of day and night there was yet no distinction.
Alone that One breathed calmly, self-supported.
Other than It was none, nor aught above It.

"Darkness there was at first in darkness hidden;
This universe was undistinguished water.
That which in void and emptiness lay hidden
Alone by power of fervor was developed.

"Then for the first time there arose desire,
Which was the primal germ of mind, within it.
And sages, searching in their heart, discovered
In Nothing the connecting bond of Being.

"And straight across their cord was then extended:
What then was there above? or what beneath it?
Life-giving principles and powers existed
Below the origin—and striving upward.

"Who is it knows? Who here can tell us surely
From what and how this universe has risen?
And whether not till after it the gods lived?
Who then can know from what it has arisen?

"The source from which the universe has risen
And whether it was made or uncreated,
He only knows, who from the highest heaven
Rules, the all-seeing Lord—or does not He know?"

—*Hymn* 129

In India, as in Greece, there was a tentative search for an impersonal self-existent source of the universe —a first cause of all. Fire, Water, Breath, Kama (desire), Vac (speech) were suggested. The Charvakas in India, like the Epicureans in Greece, were satisfied

with atomism. But, though the creator was banished, materialism did not prevail. When the Vedic Creator, Prajapati, said, "May I become many," the direction of Indian cosmic speculation was indicated. Henceforth, for philosophers, the manifold universe was woven in the web of the divine essence. Gods and worlds alike became only transient patterns struck out momentarily on the stable background of eternal Being. The cosmic, magical energy of the sacrifice, the mystical experience of the saints, the rise of a higher ideal of the good life beyond both earth and the Vedic heaven, had discredited the happy, personal gods of old. The ultimate nature of the universe was sought in a spiritual Reality—the infinite, immanent Soul of the world, the unchanging Real seen only in broken and confused glimpses in the world of time and change. Thus the Chandogya-Upanishad, III 14:

"This universe is Brahman. Its material is spirit, its body is life, its form is light—all embracing, silent, undisturbed; this is my soul in the inmost heart, smaller than a seed of grain; this is my soul in the inmost heart greater than the earth, greater than the heavens, greater than all these worlds—this is Brahman."

In any theory of the universe there must be something without beginning. The religions of Semitic origin—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have chosen to say, "In the beginning, God." In the religions of the Orient—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism —the universe itself is beginningless and endless. It

moves in vast rhythms which are ages of the world. Since there is no creator to start a new cycle when a cosmic era has come to a pause, the religions of Indian origin usually attribute the initiation of a new kalpa to the aggregate, quiescent karma of all sentient beings. Since the universe exists only that living beings may break the bonds of karma and escape the endless wheel of samsara, cycle must follow cycle forever. Within the vast time-vistas of these great periods there is a rhythm of running down and degradation followed by the progressive counterpoise of upbuilding. The mind grows weary in contemplation before these endless Oriental ages of the world.

The Sankhya philosophers of India argued vigorously against the idea of a creator-god. For them, there are two beginningless ultimates, Purusha, the infinite number of souls, and Prakriti, matter. Through the influence of the souls on Prakriti, the balance of its qualities or gunas is disturbed and a cycle of the sensible world comes into being. The souls, however, remain forever detached. Thus the universe has the character of a theater in which the soul spectators become so absorbed in the physical actors as to feel agony and ecstasy in their experiences in time. But it is all a blunder. The puppet play of the world ceases for illuminated souls.

Buddhism, building on the Hindu pattern, elaborated not only a cosmology, but also a cosmic geology and geography. Beyond our universe the Buddhist

philosopher pictured an infinite number of universes of varied characteristics, endlessly in six directions. In addition to these were Buddhafields, the paradise abodes of bliss of emancipated souls on the way to Buddhahood. Vastness and grandeur characterize this dreaming. The immensities of astronomical galaxies are nothing new to Buddhism.

Our world is cylindrical and rests at bottom on space or ether. Above the ether is a layer of air, solid and impenetrable. Above this is water, then gold or hard rock and finally the surface layer of earth. In the center of the world is Mount Meru. Around it are seven concentric rocky circles of mountains very far apart and separated by water. Outside of the last range is the salt ocean, in which are the four great continents of which India is on the south. Encircling the whole world is the iron range of Lokāloka. The sun and moon and stars move around Mount Meru. The distances are magnificent. Only the modern unit of light years would be adequate to measure them.

Above the earth is a series of heavens inhabited by gods and spiritual beings with characteristics suited to their abodes. On the earth are man and the animals. Just beneath are the ghosts. Below are an infinite number of hells, hot and cold, waiting for the souls whose deeds deserve them.[1] Before such a picture the modest

[1] On Buddhist Cosmology see, W. M. McGovern, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy*.

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little flat earth of mediæval Christianity with its heaven above and hell below seems quaintly parochial.

The system of classical Chinese thought appears remarkably modern. It was very near to naturalism. A surprising feature is that there was no dualism in ancient China. All existences were modes of the single natural universe. Through every phase of the phenomenal world, from the simplest unit to the most complex form of human society, ran a harmonizing, cosmic order. Man was an integral part of the natural world. Lao-tse of the sixth century B.C. may serve as one interpreter among many:

"In the beginning was the Tao alone. In it, however, there were two imminent potentialities—the Yin and Yang. Suddenly these were objectified in sensible form as heaven (Yang) and earth (Yin). That was the moment of origin, the beginning of time. Thenceforth the Tao may be distinguished by the phrase—Heaven-Earth. From these two came, by exfoliation, all existing things" (*Tao-Teh-King*, Ch. I).

"Before time and beyond time, there was an existence, self-sufficient, eternal, infinite, complete, omnipotent. Beyond it, before the beginning, there was nothing. Let us call it the formless, mystery, or the Tao" (Ch. I).

Again:

"There is an existence of unknown origin, before heaven and earth, unique, imperceptible, unchangeable, omnipotent, the Mother of all that is. I do not know how to name it. I call it Tao. One might, if necessary, call it the Great One, since it is the great out-going and returning One, the principle of the cyclic revolution of the cosmos, of the beginning and ending of

all existences. The name Grand is wrongly used when applied to the Emperor, or to Heaven or to Earth. It belongs only to the Tao, the ultimate cause of all" (Ch. XXV).

"The Tao itself is like a vast abyss, an infinite source. All phenomenal existences are produced by its evolution. But phenomenal things, terminal thrusts of the Tao, add nothing to the Tao. They neither enlarge it, nor increase it, nor make it more complete. Though they come out from it they do not make it less nor empty it. The Tao remains ever the same" (Ch. IV).

In the work of Chuang-tse is reported an interpretation credited to the mythical Lieh-tse:

"There is a producer which has not been produced, a transformer which remains untransformed. This, without beginning, has produced all things; this, changeless, changes all things. Since the beginning of production the producer has not ceased to produce nor the transformer ceased to give rise to change. The chain of production and change is unbroken, the process is without end. The producer is the Yin-Yang, the Tao under its two-fold alternating form" (*Chuang-tse*, Ch. XXII).

There is a contrast here between East and West. Clinging to a personal God, both Semite and Christian have preferred to leave the beginning and end of the universe in his omnipotent hands. Long ago, the Orient learned to be mentally and emotionally attuned to the immensities of the ever-recurring rhythms of a cosmos beginningless and endless.

To feel at home in the universe was and is an achievement. Early man may have taken his world with casual naturalness. The order of nature probably went unnoticed. Only the startling and uncanny events

were marked with the "lookout" sign of danger. Cultured man, however, learned to stand in awe before the vast, inexorable movements of the universe. The powers of man were feeble when confronted with the ruthless drive of nature forces. Life was good, but all living things marched monotonously toward the shadowland of death. A Sphinx-like indifference or a terrifying hostility was as real as the smiling moods of the natural world. To feel comfortably secure, it was necessary to accept the universe. Religion showed the way. Among many modes there are four that stand out as important.

Poetically and artistically the most satisfying manner is that of absolute idealism, best illustrated in Hindu religions. If one may read the ultimate meaning of the universe in terms of spirit, and identify the lonely individual with the universal Soul, man may smile in the face of time and change. In the timeless unity of the absolute spirit there is peace. The world is only a transient phase of the one reality, a garment woven by time, obscuring the ineffable mystery. The soul of man, conscious of oneness with the divine, may live in the world undismayed by apparent tragedy and evil, for the totality makes harmonious music in the infinite spirit. The universe is the dance of the Divine One, a dance of beauty and love and joy. Man shares the dance of life and after his brief moment sinks into the blissful silence of the eternal peace.

A second mode is that of Confucianism and early

Taoism. Since man is the flowering of a cosmic order, he has a secure place in the scheme of things. Nature is good when harmonious relationships are maintained. Just as an oak tree or a violet attains beauty and perfection of form by complete yielding to the laws of nature, so man gains peace and happiness by a complete naturalness. The irresistible force of the whole universe acts through the man who seeks to embody the heaven-earth order. Losing himself, he finds security, happiness, and peace. Perfectly human, the cosmos is perfected in him. There is a beautiful egotism in these theories of man's place in nature, but by means of them man could feel more cozily at home.

There is a third way of accepting the universe which would seem to be available only for the tough-minded. It is the way of determinism, a frank acceptance of fate. Only when seen superficially is it austere and forbidding. In reality, it has been welcomed among all peoples, in all ages of the history of religions. Fatalism gives a fine courage to face the facts of the world and one who knows that destiny rules may be happy and care-free. "Four desires control man, giving him no rest—namely, the desire for long life, the desire for reputation, for dignity, and for wealth. They who have attained these things fear that they may lose them. They always tremble, wondering whether they will live or die. All this is because they do not understand the working of fate and believe that external things may affect them. But men who

yield themselves to fate worry no longer about the length of life, about reputation, dignity, or wealth. Always contented, they enjoy an incomparable peace because they have understood that fate rules all things and nothing has power over them" (*Lieh-tse*. Ch. VII). These words of Yang-Chu, spoken in China of the fifth century B.C., illustrate the attitude.

Most familiar to the mind of the West is the world-theory of theism. God is above and beyond the universe, but his will is the efficient cause working through it. His providence is ever present. He "marshals all human things the righteous way." Under the shelter of his kindly care man, in spite of all his helplessness, may feel secure. As some of the great theologians of Christendom and Islam have seen, the will of God, running as a controlling thread through all events, leads logically to an ultimate determinism. Even so, a personal Allah would still, to the tender-minded, seem preferable to an impersonal fate. To men accustomed to the theistic view of the universe, the impersonal or super-personal or godless universes of Oriental religions are desolate and disconcerting. All serve the same purpose. All are ways of reading the nature of the universe in terms of human hopes. All are brave efforts of man to believe that he belongs, and that his life has some central significance in the relentless drift of time. It remained for modern science to reveal the integral at-homeness of man in his world.

The first view of the universe through the eyes of

the scientist was disturbing. In cosmologies, woven of imagination and hope, man was naturally central. But science challenged his egotism and shook his dreams of security. Vast swinging cycles of inexorable movement dwarfed him and his little earth. Of all the religions, only Hinduism and Buddhism were prepared to view with composure the magnificent march of stars revealed by modern astronomy. Christianity for a time drew back appalled. Unfortunately, the social and religious sciences were late upon the scene and so could give no help in making the mental and emotional adjustment. It seemed to religious men that science was threatening the very citadels of eternal truth. If history of religions could then have shown the relative and functional nature of all the ancient views of the world and of the gods, centuries of conflict and misunderstanding might have been avoided. It has become so natural for us now to relate the ideas of creator-gods to specific temporal phases of human history, that labored efforts to project them, in actuality, beyond the beginning of the new universe, appear fantastic. Cosmic origins we may not know. We know the origin of the gods. All these beloved figures are functions of human social living many millions of æons on this side of the beginning. Yet for generations arguments were made to reconcile the old and new cosmologies. Deism, in the eighteenth century, accepted the mathematico-scientific universe, accepted also the traditional religious idea of origins, and then, to har-

monize the two, exiled God from the world leaving him only the status of creator and final judge. When evolution clashed with cosmology in the nineteenth century, modernizers made peace by asserting that evolution is God's method of creation. These are familiar examples and fairly typical of the adjustments that were made decade after decade, until the religious sciences came to the help of both science and religion. When both views are recognized as relative, conflict yields to understanding. Like all the builders of cosmologies during the long ages, we moderns construct our theory of the universe in relation to the knowledge of our day. There is, perhaps, one difference. We are conscious that our view is not eternal truth.

The question of ultimate origins may be an insoluble problem. Modern science is, at this point, in exactly the same position as the theorizers of the ancient world. To begin with Tao, or God, or galaxies is only to postpone the question and put a term to thought. Before the beginning, both science and philosophy stand silent, gazing into the unknown. The swinging cycles of the Oriental universes, eternally turning on themselves, bring the mind to rest most artistically—but the problem remains.

The stellar universe makes a splendid theater for our life drama. The background challenges thought and emotion. Here are grandeur and vastness. Multitudes of mighty suns move ceaselessly on annual pilgrimages of six hundred millions of miles, pass each

other in orderly streams at immense distances, all, perhaps, obeying the organic unity of the galaxy in its rhythmic turning. In form our universe is like a colossal disk, jeweled and festooned with stars, the glittering, dancing pattern thickly woven at the edges in the Milky Way. The diameter of the disk is calculated to be 100,000 light years. Masters of the heavenly lore report that among these swarming suns, some are young and some are old; that dying suns are sometimes restored to fiery youth in the fury of cataclysmic collision.

There is rhythm in the universe, from the insensible little system of the atom, to the grandeur of a solar system, to the awful immensity of a galaxy, perhaps, even to the unimaginable magnificence of a galaxy of galaxies. Sages speak of order in the universe, though the span of the swift age of man is so small that any arrangement in those unplumbed deeps of space-time would be order for him. He gazes for only a moment into a universe where a million years are as one day. Our solar system, in spite of its seeming greatness of sweep, is relatively tiny and isolated among the stars. Yet we belong, in a very real sense. The physical material of the universe is of the same nature as that of our parent sun. From electron to galaxy there is continuity.

Our earth is a child of the sun. Details of the firebirth of the solar family are now written in the records of the scientists. If there had been astronomers on

planets like ours in that far-off day when a wandering star loomed up from the deeps of space moving toward the sun, they might have predicted another cosmic cataclysm and the end of one more cycle. The lonely star swung close, too close for the peace of the sun, and was gone. Under the attraction of the visitor, the materials of the future planets were torn from the parent source, hurled violently in opposite directions, and deflected so that they could not return. The orbital movement around the sun began. One of that shattered, fire-born fellowship was destined to be the mother of man and his earthly home. Through millions of years the scattered cosmic stuff circling in space was gathering into an ever-growing nucleus to form the world. Fragments of the disruption still rain in. At last, in the leisurely drift of æons, there were lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere—the earth with a solid core, the surface made ready by ages of interaction of land, water, and air to be the abode of life. The vital materials necessary were in the physical structure of the planet.

The story of life, from electron to civilization, is the story of a process of ever-increasing complexification. It involves hundreds of millions of years of action, reaction, interaction. The key words are continuity, organism, environment, drives, synthesis, levels, novelty. Since evolution has been taken seriously, there has been an insistent movement to overlap the sciences—chemistry with physics, physiology

with both chemistry and physics, psychology with physiology and chemistry. The reason is that the original stuff of our complex natural world has persisted in continuity through the various levels of its process of complexification. Even the ultimates of physics, proton and electron, positive and negative charges of electricity—"the building stones of the universe"—in the simplest of all units of form, are now described as organisms—that is, patterns of activity. The elements are more or less stable ways in which they have formed systems. But they act in an environment and the effort to maintain their significant form in the environment reveals the characteristics of the activity pattern. There is a drive or thrust for satisfaction. In terms better applied to sentient forms of life, the pattern of the organism dictates the wishes. The satisfaction of wishes maintains the pattern. But the environment plays its part of hostility or favor or as dictator of change. This is language inappropriately anthropopathic, but it applies, at least as metaphor, to the activity even of elemental forms. There are a pattern and a purposive quality—a drive—even to the elements.

Add another result of interaction, synthesis, and there is novelty, a new organization, with characteristics different from those of the original elements in the synthesis. Consider HCl, NaCl, H_2O. Out of the chemical ultimates, the organization of all living things is prepared. It is a process of complexification stretching through æons of time. There are levels of com-

plexity—physical, chemical, physiological, psychical, social—but there is continuity through them all.

It is not our task to tell the well-known details of that progressive increase of complexity. For a world picture, it is only necessary to note the thread of the story. It lies in the purposive drive of organisms, in relation to environment, developing functions required for the persistence of the pattern of their life structure. On every level there was much wastage. There were many specializations—too specialized to endure—too much tooth, too much wing, too much armor.

Man is one of the terminal thrusts in a trunk-line of development. He is compounded of the original physical materials. In his body, as in all organized life forms, the physical elements are subjected to the pattern of organic structure. He is a chemical compound. He is physiologically organized, carrying in his make-up the unconscious memories of the life quest of millions of years in sub-human types. The organic basis of his psychical reactions is rooted in the experience of life-types earlier than man. His social habits are a still greater complexification. The development of intelligence, the method of reaction in relation to environment which involves the capable use of meanings, is his crowning achievement. From the human point of view the planet lives at its highest in man. He is a physico-chemico-physiological-psychical-social functioning of the original cosmic material. He is an earth-child, a growing point of the world-life. In him

the planet has learned to make choices, to solve problems with the new instrument of intelligence. Seen through human eyes, this is a splendid climax of the blind, tortured groping of tens of millions of years. In his short span, man has made marvelous strides toward the mastery of the world in the interests of his own particular thrust of life. He has made a sad difference in the world for other forms of living things, many of them older than he. Man begins to feel at home. As the sun belongs, in a natural sense, to the infinite universe of stars, and our earth to the sun, so in a much more meaningful way man belongs to the earth. He is not a fortuitous visitor. He is an integral part of the life-history of the planet. So harmoniously is he related to his mother-earth, that there is some justification for his claim that he represents the cosmic life in its most effective form. Indeed, the planet may be said to have come to consciousness of itself in man. With that consciousness there is involved, on the human level of evolution, the possibility of a purposive development of future history more adapted to the type of value-quest represented in the human line.

The quiet feeling of naturalness, of at-homeness in the world, has not yet taken firm hold upon the general consciousness. During the youth of humanity there were many ruined experiments in culture. Experiences of thwarting and failure, the cruel consequences of conflicting purposes, the facts of the world-environment often brutally hostile to the values most cher-

ished, turned man's hopes to an unseen world of the ideal. Religions created the dualism and philosophies intrenched it. There is even today a sting in the word materialism and a touch of honor in the word spiritual, though there is no place for the old dualisms in the new universe. What name we may give to the original stuff which, by its endless complexification, has resulted in the cultural life we live, makes little difference since horror and tragedy are, in cosmic history, as real as love and beauty. Millions of organic forms, through millions of years, driving toward ends, have made a very complicated pattern of the web of life. The age of man is but a moment on the clock of time, the age of culture still more brief, yet man would read the meaning of it all in terms of his noblest hope. The historic dualism placed fulfillment above and beyond the world in another realm of reality. The new naturalism seeks fulfillment in a more satisfactory social order in this world. Spiritual values have meaning only in human relations and are as much a part of the evolutionary process as the physical structure of man. Seen from the standpoint of philosophy of religion, the quest of the ages points to the control of the process of evolution on the social level for the actualizing of the highest values in human living. It is audacious but magnificent, and it may be possible. The flowering of the planet into cultural values came only yesterday. Consciousness of its meaning belongs to the morning of today.

Universes, Old and New

The religions of mankind are products of the human quest for the ideal world. They represent the manifold ways in which social groups have made more or less successful adjustment to the surrounding natural world in order to live safely, adequately, and with assurance. Among all the patterns of behavior in which human hungerings and wishes have been channeled, religions, in their ideals, have held before the eyes of men a synthesis of values involved in the good life; in their programs, have indicated the socially approved methods of achieving the values, and in their thought-forms, have related the quest of the ideal life to the ever-growing knowledge of the nature of the universe. Often there was blind groping, often discouragement and world-flight, but the torch that led forward was the ideal of life fulfillment. Refusing to bow before brute force or to be awed by time, man molds a world-process to his will. The universe through him is still in the throes of social creation. If the sun will be careful in its journey through the paths of the stars, man may yet build the home of his dreams.

Chapter Three

HUMAN NATURE AND RELIGION

MODERN man found it much easier to interpret the nature of the universe and his place within it, than to understand his own nature. Yet that knowledge is indispensable for religion, since both the ideal of the good life and the practical technique for actualizing the values of the ideal, depend upon the nature of the human individual. Only an adequate analysis of the nature of human nature and of the behavior of the individual in social living can point the way for education, intelligent direction, and the organization of social patterns to make possible the satisfactions of the complete life.

Culture religions have been greatly concerned with the problem, but until recent years the inertia of inherited ideas has blocked advance in understanding. The reason is self-evident. Religions were made by man for man. Though the gods often seemed to monopolize the scene, and the supernatural to dwarf the human, in the last analysis even these dualistic and other-worldly systems came to a focus upon the origin, nature, and destiny of man. On the basis of a naïve understanding of the nature of the self, the thought

structures and programs of salvation were built. To surrender the traditional idea of human nature was to endanger the whole edifice. Unfortunately, the old ideas were a heritage from primitive man, sanctified by religion and dignified by philosophy.

The rise of the idea of soul as separable from the body was a momentous event in early human thought. From it sprang all the dualisms that have troubled religion and philosophy through the centuries. The gods, as kindly nature-powers, were on the scene before the advent of souls and spirits. Afterward, on the wings of the spirit concept they retreated as invisible spiritual beings into the unseen behind the powers of nature. Through the influence of the same idea, the realm of the dead took on deeper meaning and the entire world of nature came alive in a new way. The invisible behind the visible, once rooted in thought, split the universe in two—soul-body, spirit-matter, supernatural-natural.

The words used to designate a human being in early and primitive groups are clear evidence that then men were not thinking in terms of the later dualism. When a man had three, five, seven or thirty-two "souls," these were simply meanings or symbols, various signs for indicating that individual. Often they represented functions of the human organism. "Breath," "blood," "life," "shadow," "heart," "intelligence," "name," were different ways of referring to a living being. All came to mean the "soul" as dis-

tinct from the body when that separation was established in thought. They meant the inner life as distinct from the visible form. Experiences of dreams, of trance or death, may have been the principal source of the suggestion of a separable soul. The idea would follow naturally from the fact that unreflective peoples took dream experiences to be as real as the happenings of their waking hours. And the dead did return in dreams. They themselves went away on thrilling adventures while the body remained behind in sleep. An existence was possible, then, apart from the body. But the folk of early cultures were not intrigued by either the state or the idea. The cult of the dead shows that for most peoples the soul state was a shadowy existence, not at all to be desired and very far from the later philosophic idea of disembodied, spiritual life. Aralu, Sheol, and Hades were not pleasant places. One entered their narrow gates under death's dread summons, reluctantly and in sorrow. Man's real existence was in the life of this world. The earliest idea of the soul was vague, but it was sufficient. In later ages of distress and disaster it opened a door to the future for frustrated man.

Since the goal of religion was the complete perfecting of human life, in most of the religions of culture the nature of man received some analysis. A survey of typical interpretations is suggestive, not for any illuminating insight into human nature, but because of

the diversity of stress. The emphasis varied according to the religious ideal.

In classical Chinese thought, man is a part of the natural world and human nature a temporal embodiment of the Tao or order of nature. The individual is compounded of two elements, both material, one more subtle, a portion of Yang (Heaven) one more gross, a portion of Yin (Earthy). In each of these, there is contained a force or principle of activity also material. After death, both of these elements, at the dissolution of the body, return to their source in the Yin and Yang of the order of nature. Hoai-nan-tse of the first century B.C., credited with the above analysis, explained further that if the body were killed or died before its time, the lower soul, not sufficiently ripe to return to the earth, continued to exist as a wandering presence or koei. On the other hand, if by excess of passion or too great mental labor the higher soul were consumed before its time, the body possessed only the lower soul and the result was an insane or foolish person.

Twelve centuries later the "Great Master," Chucius, reiterated the ancient doctrine in opposition to the Buddhist theory of survival. He asserted that the two souls of man were both material, the higher as well as the lower, and were dissipated at death as smoke disappears when the fire is put out.

"The souls of ancestors no longer exist in spite of what the ancient books may say. The cult which their descendants perform

is only a profession of gratitude to parents for the gift of life. The generations of men are like waves of the sea. Each wave is individual, but all are modes of the same water. I, who exist today, am an embodiment of the cosmic principle and matter. My ancestors, in their time, were also modes of the same elements. No more. The elements remain. I am in communion with my ancestors through them. In the same way, heaven, earth and all existences are one with me. I call heaven my father and earth my mother and all beings my brothers, for all are one with me. The whole universe and I are one single existence."

The consensus of Chinese thought was that human nature, as a phase of the Tao, is naturally good. Mencius taught that man has a moral instinct which apprehends the good and is displayed in benevolence, equity, wisdom, self-control, and altruism. The great task of education, therefore, is to conserve the native goodness of the child heart. In this he followed the teaching of his master, Confucius, who said, "The people are born good and are changed by environment" (*Shu-King,* S. B. E. III, 234). "By nature, men are nearly alike, by practice they become wide apart" (*Analects,* XVII, 2). There were men like Hsunn-tse who asserted that human nature was bad, that goodness was a convention imposed upon the individual by education. The general opinion was against him. The Chinese theory of the universe is manifest here. The Tao, as a harmonious whole, includes the social order. Disorder and wrong enter only when man ceases to be natural. The perfection of life in blessedness is simply a matter of allowing human

nature to express the order of the Tao. Schools might disagree as to the method of attunement to the Tao, but all agreed that humanity was a true exfoliation of the one universal reality.

In striking contrast to Chinese naturalism is the Hindu interpretation of the nature of man. Indian religions specialized on the soul. After the yea-saying Vedic age, the thought of India turned from the world to find reality behind or beyond it. The immaterial soul was perfectly fitted to this rôle. A system like that of the Charvakas, which denied the soul and immortality, and made consciousness merely a concomitant of the material organism seems strangely out of place in the Indian environment. The teaching of the Upanishads, coming to classical form in Vedantism, identified the soul of the individual with the Absolute, "the soul of Brahman, one without a second." The interests of popular religion produced a variant of this high philosophic doctrine. Though life in the unsatisfying world of change and defeat might be easily surrendered for the real existence of bliss beyond the weary wheel of time, yet to lose the personal self in the superconscious infinite was too vague a goal for the plain man. Ramanuja solved the problem by teaching that the soul of man is a part of the soul of Brahman, but an eternal entity retaining conscious personality in the realm of bliss.

Some Indian religions denied the all-inclusive divine Being. The soul itself then became the ultimate re-

ality. In the Sankhya system, the real nature of man was the soul as free intelligence. Corresponding to it, in the world of time was the psycho-physical organism, including all the functions belonging to human nature—mind, consciousness, feeling, sense. But the soul was not embodied. As a crystal placed beside a jasmine flower takes the color of the flower without being really colored, so the soul, through illusion, seems to share in the experiences of the bodily life. The true knowledge of the soul brings liberation, a realization of the eternal state of existence in perfect bliss.

The Jains agree with the Sankhya in making the soul ultimate, but the Jain souls are actually embodied on the wheel of reincarnation under the domination of karma. The soul takes the shape of the body and pervades it, whatever the nature of the incarnation may be, from lowly forms of life to the human and beyond human. The true nature of the soul is perfection. When the bonds of karma are broken, the liberated soul returns to its true status as perfect existence, perfect consciousness, perfect bliss.

Varied as these typical Hindu soul-theories seem to be, they are in fact a unity. The final analysis of human nature shows that man in his true essence belongs to a realm of reality apart from the natural world of time and change. The quality of that reality in all these systems is *sat-chit-ananda,* ultimate perfection and bliss. This is the common nature of the eternal-entity Soul of the Sankhya and of the Jains. It is also

the nature of Brahman. The main difference lies in the acceptance or denial of an absolute God. For all of them, the karma-driven incarnation is only an unfortunate phase of experience. The timeless soul is the central reality.

Early Buddhism is an interesting variation of the Indian religions. Gautama shared with his Hindu contemporaries the ideas of karma and reincarnation. His quest, like theirs, was for joy and peace, free from the futility of endless life on the wheel. He was original in the things he omitted. Both the absolute God and the soul were denied. His analysis of the human individual showed a constantly changing flux of five constituent factors, or skandhas. A person was a compound of body (rupa), consciousness (vijnana), feeling (vedana), thought or conception (samjna) and will (samskara). The last takes on the characteristic set of habit and is, therefore, the karma-bearing factor of the individual life. There was no immutable self, no eternal soul, underlying the changing complex of personality. "Personality, ye monks, will I show you and the arising of personality and the annihilation of personality and the way leading to the annihilation of personality. And what is personality? The five grasping groups are so to be named." "Whether, monks, Buddhas arise or whether Buddhas do not arise, it remains a fact, and a fixed and necessary condition, that all things are transient, subject to suffering and lacking in an ego." "Since a self and anything belong-

ing to a self, in truth and actuality is not reachable, is not, then, the standpoint of faith—'There is the world; there is the self; that shall I be, permanent, lasting, eternal, unchangeable; eternally the same shall I so persist'—is not this, ye monks, wholly and completely an opinion of fools?" Freed from the metaphysical soul, it was possible, through knowledge of human nature and an understanding of the causal law, to control karma and win the peace of Nirvana.

This was twenty-five centuries ago. Professor Lakshmi Narasu gives a modern interpretation.

"The complex of skandhas is everchanging but ever determined by their antecedent character. So long as the skandhas remain the same, the person is the same for practical purposes. The so-called self has no nature apart from the attributes in which it creates itself. The continuity of attributes is sufficient to preserve personal identity. . . . Each individual possesses characteristics inherited in two ways. Biological inheritance takes place by the reproductive cells, while the mind inherits from the environment which is specially created by man for man's development. The thoughts, words, deeds of an individual naturally involve relations between him and others and are therefore never wholly confined to him alone. They pass on to others and remain in them after the person's death, that is to say, when the skandhas no longer occur in their customary mode of association constituting that person. So one dies, but one's karma is reborn in other individuals without the transmigration of a soul. Deeds but not the bodies in which they are done survive in fullness. Past deeds exercise an influence on later events. . . . Every man is linked by a communion on one side, with all that men have done, and on the other side, with all that men may do in the future. . . . This view alone can be consistent with the principles of impermanence and soullessness." (*The Buddhist Annual of Ceylon*, 1927, p. 72).

Thus is original Buddhism oriented to the modern world. The Hindu systems which put the emphasis upon an eternal soul and the developed Mahayana Buddhism find the adjustment much more difficult to make.

The religion of Zarathushtra was practical and ethical. In the world warfare with evil the effective weapons were good thoughts, good words, good deeds. Man's happiness here and hereafter depended upon his bearing in that conflict. Human nature was interpreted on that background. The important thing was that man, as a responsible self, had freedom of will and ability to distinguish and choose between good and evil. The body was the instrument of the soul. There was no clear analysis of the nature of man. The Iranian texts speak of him as consisting of body, life, intelligence, conscience, and *fravashi*. All had their part to play in guiding man in the right path. The *fravashi* was an extra precaution—a kind of guardian presence accompanying the soul to give help and guidance. The soul wore the crown of authority and made for itself happiness or torment in the immortal life beyond. There is a graphic touch in the teaching that man's deeds make of his conscience a companion for the future—either a horrible, unspeakable hag or a young maiden of marvelous beauty.

Christianity was heir to Israel and to the religions of the Mediterranean world. Hebrew and Greek elements are compounded in the Christian interpretation

of man. Both lines of development illustrate the interrelation between the religious ideal and the analysis of human nature. The Semitic religions were interested in the life of this world. Man was a unity of soul and body. Soul, spirit, heart, were various ways of referring to the principle of life—the will, intelligence, or emotions. Worthful life was in the body. At death man was only a shade maintaining a helpless existence in the grave or the underworld. Immortality belonged to the nation and family, not to the individual. During the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, the national life of Israel was troubled and the ideal of the good world was projected to a future age. At the same time, the individual became more important. Then the idea of bodily resurrection arose to guarantee to the faithful and heroic ones a share in the world to come. The Greek idea of the soul's immortality attracted Jewish thinkers, but found no logical place in the historic religion; for Judaism was not other-worldly. The "world to come" was God's Kingdom on earth. Resurrection fitted the picture better—a bodily resurrection to share in the social joys of a real world.

In Greece the development was different. Throughout the age of triumphant Greek civilization the life of this world was glorified. The Greek was too close to nature and the warm joys of human relationships in clan and city state to look beyond life. The realm of the dead was rather dismal. An earlier Minoan cul-

ture might dream of Happy Isles; the conquering Greeks loved to live in this world and learned to temper laughter with wisdom, and desire with beauty. But when the city states began to crumble a change came. Socrates pointed the soul to the beyond. For Plato, the real world was the realm of the ideal and man an immortal soul in flight through time-shadows toward the true, the beautiful, and the good. Heartening the peoples during those centuries of dissolution of the early securities, the ancient nature-cults from Egypt to Rome took on the rôle of Mysteries, means to immortality. Human nature then was only important as the abode of a soul, preëxistent, or immortal or made immortal by the magic touch of the divine. The eternal soul of Neo-Platonism, questing beyond sense and knowledge to the ineffable God, completed the picture and built the final bridge from the Græco-Roman world to Christianity.

Beginning with the Jewish idea of the nature of man, Christianity, as a religion of salvation for the individual, developed faith in survival of death with the body. When the hope of the kingdom of God on the earth grew dim, the Greek idea of immortality was more congenial. From Augustine to the moderns, man's ultimate significance in Christian thought lay in the worth of his soul. Created by God, corrupted by Adam's sin, yet retaining freedom of will, man was ever a candidate for salvation. The important thing was not the bodily life, but the origin and destiny of

the soul. The goal of the religious quest was in the perfect world beyond the gates of death.

It will be abundantly clear even from so swift a survey that the quest for the good life determines the way in which the emphasis shall fall in the interpretation of human nature. The primitive tribesman and savage preceded the theologian. The division of man into bodily organism and separate soul, the seat of life, emotion and will, is a heritage from that earlier age. So long as the good life was read in terms of the values of this world, the intangible soul was of secondary importance. But when man failed to win the completely satisfying life in the body, and religions established the real world of happiness and peace in a supernatural realm, then the invisible and separable soul took the central place as over against the body. The ideal existence in an immortal world or in a superhuman status after death was often closely related to the gods who were the unseen and perfect embodiments of the highest qualities of life. The soul-spirit element of man was more akin to this unseen realm and seemed clearly to be the part of man most capable of transcending the bodily state. Winging its way in the quest of true values, the immortal soul found the home of bliss eternal in the beyond. Sometimes the glorious life of the ideal world was guaranteed by God. Sometimes it was godless or beyond the gods. When gods are lacking or ignored, souls are eternal. When God, soul, and happy immortality are established together, they form

a stable complex and an argument for the necessity of any one involves the others.

The theologians and philosophers of the historic religions have had many problems thrust upon them because the ideas regarding the nature of man embodied in the religions are a heritage from an uncritical past. These old ideas have their historical roots in life and were not made in the brains of logical thinkers or discovered by any real knowledge of human nature. There were problems concerning the relationship of the soul to the body. Where was its place of residence? Was it in the heart or in the pineal gland? Was it diffused throughout the body as the Jains thought, or eternally separate from it as in the Sankhya system? Were all souls created in the soul of Adam and transmitted by generation with the body as Tertullian thought? Or was each soul a new creation according to the Eastern Church? Or were all created in Adam and by a new creation given to each body at birth as in Islam? Was the body resurrected, and in what form? Or did the soul receive a new body or a spiritual body or was it bodiless in the after-life? The crude psychology of primitive man made endless difficulties for the theologians.

When souls were created by God, who assumed responsibility for the world-program, a more serious problem arose, because created souls have some claim on their Creator and the theologian found it necessary to justify the ways of God to man. This was not

a problem in religions where souls were eternal and self-existent, nor where the gods were also on the endless wheel of reincarnation as fellow-pilgrims in quest of the bliss of release, nor in those systems where an impersonal cosmic law was ultimate. But all theisms required a theodice. Moreover, there was for them also the troublesome dilemma of reconciling the eternal purpose and plan of God with the assumption of the freedom of will and responsibility of man. For Hinduism and Buddhism a similar difficulty was presented by the inexorable working of the law of karma. How could there be responsibility, and how could there be any escape, if all that is was the result of what had been? The Ajivikas took it logically and accepted determinism; but all other Indian groups solved the problem as it was solved in Christianity by the simple device of grasping both horns of the dilemma, asserting the fact of cosmic control, and at the same time man's responsibility. Theology has been everywhere a tangled and intricate structure, not because religious thinkers lacked logic, but because they were forced to weave into a logical scheme the diverse heritage of ideas accumulated by religions rooted in a social life-process, changing since the dawn of time.

It would be futile for modern leaders of the religious adventure to seek an adequate understanding of the nature of man in the religious ideas of the past, or in the philosophies that have rationalized them. A new insight into human nature has been won. Anthro-

pology unfolds the story of the heroic climb of the races toward richer humanity. The religious sciences have interpreted the origin and functional worth of the ideas of man's nature in the historic development of religions. The social and psychological sciences reveal the mode and motives of our behavior as human beings, and the way in which we become persons. Seen in the perspective of the questing ages, the modern analysis of the nature of man lights for religion the fires of new hope.

In considering the nature of the universe we saw man as an extremely complex living organism, the terminal growing-point of one of the thrusts of planetary development, moving through time as a social process. Human nature, in a behaving individual, is composed of two inextricably interwoven strands—the inherited capacities for reaction learned through æons of past experience, and the learned patterns of the social milieu which is, in its turn, the result of ages of human history. The individual is an old-new creation. He comes endowed from the past with the capacities for developing human personality; he "grows a soul" and becomes a person in the older social environment. Integrated in the patterns of social living, he is quite unconscious of being a prolongation of the past, yet human nature, in him, is the past, biological and social, with capacities for new creation.

It is long since nature flowered into human nature, but the roots of the races run together. Mankind is a

solidarity. The common original heritage of human nature is safely guarded in the germ-cells, which are not affected by the vicissitudes of cultural weather. All the races of man show equal capacities and are differentiated not by inherited nature, but by the type of organization of the cultural milieu. They are "made different by environment and education," as Confucius had the insight to see. Man is an organism with biological needs; he is also social and can find fulfillment of his being only by establishing ways of reaction conditioned in a social setting. His impulses are channeled and molded by necessity of adjustment to a natural and social world. The urges to activity involve desires for bodily satisfactions such as food, shelter, sex, play, security, and protection; for social satisfactions in friendship, love, appreciation, honor, and a sense of belonging in a worthful way to the social group. Since no society has yet been able to provide perfectly complete satisfaction, there is always the urge for better adjustment; and finally, the persistent urge of life, the impulse to new experience. All organisms are restless in a world of endlessly changing conditions. In this respect man is only a highly-placed symbol of the groping hunger of living forms in a growing world. The heart of religion, the quest of the ages, is the outreach of man, the social animal, for the values of the satisfying life. Gaining much, he needed more, and hope ever lured him beyond the limits of his power to attain. Denied satisfaction in

the actual world, he knew how to send his soul into the invisible to share in the real world of his dreams. Heavens and Absolutes bear witness to the persistent drive of the love of life.

All this is weighted with meaning for the philosopher of religion. If the story of religious experience through the ages had not made it clear, it would now be evident from modern knowledge of the nature of man that all forms of metaphysical soul are inadequate and superfluous in describing the mind-body unity of man and the method of development of a personality. The feeling of the utter futility of all social reconstruction as related to eternal souls of the Sankhya and Vedanta type vanishes. The theological concept of original sin and the helplessness involved in grounding vice and wrong-doing in human nature disappear. The traditional idea of sin is thrown into an entirely new setting and takes on a new meaning. If "souls" are grown in the social mold, the seat of so-called sin is in society rather than in the individual. The dread shadow of karma, as dictator of social experience, is lifted. No longer should it be possible to justify social status, or to escape responsibility for social evils, by this ancient device.

But the positive gain is greater. If human nature is plastic as it comes through the portals of birth and is shaped into persons of nobility of character and beauty of life through the opportunities offered by the organization of the social environment, then religious

ideals may have a chance for actualization through the purposive remaking of the social world. For social groups also are plastic. When religion is understood and thoroughly naturalized, when wish-fulfillments and dream-worlds are surrendered, then the quest of the good life will become a search for the method of creating the good society. Intelligence will find the way.

And human nature includes intelligence. Man is the point at which nature in its social form has developed the capacity for purposive direction of the blind flow of interaction and change. Though much of his activity may be controlled by the learned, energy-saving routine of habit, and though large areas of his joy in living do not involve the necessity of thought, man has also the capacity for creative reconstruction of his environment. In the light of accumulated experience, he has the ability to delay reaction, to survey the situation, and to throw the switch in a deliberately chosen direction. He has learned how to lay the reins of his purpose over events of the natural and social world. Even primitive man was capable in this respect when he worked with the tangible and practical things of life. Only when he dealt with factors of his environment where his knowledge failed or was faulty does his technique seem fantastic. Modern man has developed a marvelous power. Time adds significance to Swinburne's words—"Glory to man in the highest! For man is the master of things." But

modern man, like his primitive brother, is as yet more effective in the practical mastery of things than in the conquest of the higher values. This capacity of man is perhaps the most important factor in the newer vision of religion—making for hope that intelligence, as method, in the service of human ideals, equipped with modern knowledge and tools, may build the society in which human nature may rise to more lovely forms. Man is still in the making. No dreamer may dare to predict what he may be when he has learned to actualize rather than to project his ideals.

"What is man?" Professor M. C. Otto asks and answers:

"He is what he *is* in the complexity and contradictoriness of his present striving. He is what he *was* in those ages of which he is the ripening fruit. He is what he shall find means of *becoming* in the generations to be while yet his race may last. Being so much, he presents the appearance of hopeless contradiction, denying what he expresses, expressing what he denies. In strictness indefinable, he defines himself every age and every hour. He escapes the neat formulæ in which the unimaginative would capture him and refuses to validate the graphs invented to picture his career. No work of reason or art has portrayed the depths to which he can sink or the heights to which he can rise. Helpless, without environmental opportunity, recalcitrant conditions have been unable to crush him, nor favourable conditions to lull him to rest. He may come to naught in the end, but while the planet permits he will be, as Whitman said, 'immense and interminable' like the rivers; he will be the 'golden impossibility' of Emerson, the 'not yet formed' of Browning, the 'indescribable focus of the universe' of Hardy." (*International Journal of Ethics*, January, 1929, pp. 203-204.)

Chapter Four

THE NATURE OF THE GODS

THE gods are a splendid company. It is a great pity that they are not better known. An appreciation of their function and a familiarity with the biographies of the greatest of them might have saved much bitterness and misunderstanding. What Goethe said of language, and Max Müller said of religion, is true also of the gods—"He who knows only one, knows none." And they can only be really known in the light of their origin and history. In the drama of religion they play their parts in forms innumerable. Men come and go with the changing generations. The gods bridge the centuries, for the roots of their life are in the immortal social process. They have individual differences very distinct, but their rôle is always the same. They are man's helpers in the quest for the values of the good life.

The gods date from the primitive dawn. If they were not present in early religions their absence would create a problem. All culture-religions which have their sources in pre-history and primitivity have, or have had, gods. When they disappear from a religion, as they sometimes do, there is always a reason. Sometimes

it is the result of a culture which has outgrown the gods or found the idea untenable, morally or intellectually. Sometimes the gods have become useless or have been superseded by a more fundamental cosmic control.

In simpler and less sophisticated ages the gods were self-evident and real. The effort to win a satisfying life brought man directly into relation with the world of nature. There he found both help and hurt and he was grateful for help. It is natural, therefore, that the gods, for all early peoples, were those powers of the environment most important for the life of the group.

Scholars have long debated the problem of divine origins. Their most important disagreements have arisen from the fact that they have been trying to discover some one simple source of the *idea* of God. But early man had gods before he had ideas of gods; and the effort to discover any one origin of the idea, when it appears, is certainly doomed to defeat. A complex cluster of elements flow together in the elaboration of any conception of god, and they may appear in many combinations.

It is necessary to keep the perspective, and remember that the so-called primitive age of human history is very long. During all that time man, in larger or smaller social groups, was facing the issues of life in an environment, partly kindly and often hostile. His group customs were the safe habits learned in that life experience. In the presence of the dangerous, the mys-

terious, or the unknown, his reaction took the form of the "Take Care" sign, Mana or Taboo. Before hostile forces emotion took charge and his defense was in emotionally charged gestures, spells, or words of power. In the presence of beneficent and helpful phases of his world his reaction was also emotional, resulting in a response of gratitude and appreciation. These kindly helpers were the gods in their simplest form. Emotion, not thought, was primary. The reaction was anthropopathic and social. But in the emotional response were all the factors necessary to make the transfer of human qualities, of human will and behavior, to the powers of nature. To look for any clear conception in this situation would be to miss the reality. These gods were actual, present helpers in time of need. Men met them as friends in the everyday world of fact.

We should expect, therefore, to find the "high gods" at the beginning, for they were the heaven powers, including Dawn, Rain, Sun, and Moon. Heaven was the source of light, of warmth, of the life-giving rain. After long drought, the boisterous storm, bringing relief, was focused emotionally; so also the dawn-light, after the night of darkness and danger. "The Goddess radiant bringing every splendor appeared in light, and threw the portals open" (R. V. I: 113. 4). Even the gentle rain was gratefully welcomed—

"And every creature then receives the quickening draught,
When o'er the land Parjanya's grateful stream descends.

"The thirsty fields he covered with his waters
Of plenteous falling rains: but 'tis enough now.
He caused the herbs to spring for our refreshment,
And what his people sought of him he granted."
—R. V. 5. 83. 4, 10.

When men were settled in agricultural life, the fruitful earth was equally as important as the powers of the upper heaven. All these early gods were realities, tangible and visible. They were dealt with in the way human beings are dealt with—praised, thanked, petitioned, feared, flattered, and depended upon for favors. Language helped to humanize them. This use of words which belong to human activity and feeling, in addressing the powers of the outer environment, is what gives to us the illusion of definite ideas of gods in the mind of early man.

To such naïve and natural relationships of early human groups with their world were added other elements, which developed the idea of god more familiar to the thought of culture-peoples. Most important of all was the concept of soul or spirit. A spirit behind or within the nature-power made a great difference, for then the sun might come to be known as only the sun and the divine spirit-benefactor still dwell in the unseen beyond. The ever-present sense of mysterious power, Mana, helped to magnify the gods. Akin to this was the feeling of ecstasy in group-ceremonial which flowed over into the divine object. When man began to speculate regarding the beginning of things,

the gods were the logical selection as creators. Beings dwelling in the unseen might be, and were, multiplied indefinitely to cover all manner of mysterious manifestations. As individual gods acquired more distinct personality and greater power, they were more and more depended upon for help. They became the guarantors of satisfactions in an unconquered, uncertain, and unsatisfying world. Since they did give aid, there might be no limit to their power. They might be able to fulfill all the wishes of men. Needy man magnified them by faith. The more helpless man was, the more weighted with responsibility were his gods. Thus a simple, emotional response became an idea, complex, important and pregnant with meaning.

Needless to say there have been many gods, for the environing world had many ways of entering into the daily and yearly life of man. But there were no private gods. Almost any significant reality, helpful to man, more powerful than man and master of human values, might be a god, but always of a social group —family, community, tribe, or nation. The hearth fire, the potency of field or storehouse, the first ancestor, culture-heroes, might be divine beings, as dear to man as the great gods of the heavens. They won their rank above the crowd of lesser spirits because they were at the center of interest of a group. This is the key to the later history of the gods.

All the great gods have a biography written in terms of the social experience of the people to whom

they belong. After all memory of the immediate connection of the gods with particular phases of the forces of nature was blurred, and all the elements which blended to make the idea were lost to the memory of the folk, the gods remained secure, because they had long ago taken the quality of spirits and dwelt in the supernatural realm, though they might still manifest themselves through the tangible powers of the natural order. The group always had a method of dealing with them which fell into the hands of persons of power, the chief or magician or priest. Through the cult there were developed, in each generation, the attitudes toward the unseen necessary to keep the gods as realities for the people. The bond of relationship between a group and its divine helpers was often very intimate. As exalted and responsible members of the social community, the gods always were sharers in the folk-life. They were affected by its troubled or triumphant progress through the centuries. It is because of this close relationship that in following the cultural drift of the peoples, we may watch the gods change and grow or die.

Only a labored biography of the gods as individuals could present in a living picture the historic process of change. Here it is only possible to list the various factors of social experience which have been most important in the transformation of the gods we know.

Sometimes the gods die. This is the greatest change of all. Graves of the dead gods mark all the highways

of the world. Conquest of their peoples was a frequent cause of *götterdämmerung*. Archæologists digging in ancient ruins come upon their names to save them from complete oblivion. That they were splendid figures once is shown by their brave boasting on these buried stones. Rarely did gods of the early world survive the destruction of their tribes, though sometimes they maintained an existence as devils in the consciousness of their conquerors. When they failed in usefulness, gods were neglected and lost. They lived because they helped. In all the early world there were no philosophers to preserve them in webs of words. When a people migrated to a new land and took up new interests it often happened that the former gods had no function in the changed life. They lingered on for a time as names in folk-tales or in ceremonies, then grew shadowy, and were at last remembered no more. Sometimes a god failed in function, and that was the end.

The gods of a people with a long and successful history, of necessity enlarged their functions and increased in power. They grew by absorbing other gods, or by taking up the work of gods they had displaced, or through some historic experience of their people which lifted them from local figures to national or world powers. The change in the political organization was usually reflected in the god. The heavenly rulers of mighty kingdoms had the characteristics and dignity of great monarchs. An imperialism like that of ancient Egypt under Thutmose III demanded a uni-

versal god in the heavens. The earthly ruler had his counterpart in the divine realm.

The gods grew in moral height in response to the growth in the moral ideals of the religious leaders. But there was one great difference between gods and people. The moral ideal of a social group was always in advance of the actual attainments in behavior. The gods gracefully embodied it. They were perfect as over against the faulty folk. In religions that have a sacred literature this change in the character of a god may often be clearly traced. A war god, with the necessary qualities of a ruthless conqueror and destroyer, is changed into a god of mercy and justice and love in a state of culture. Moral change in the gods was inevitable, for men found it difficult to accept a god less moral than themselves and in the progress from barbarism to the higher social life the nobler morality appeared.

The most significant change in the gods came when they were confronted with the theologian and the philosopher. Then their friendly and companionable forms vanished in abstractions. The gods of old were perfectly normal factors in the historical orientation of religions, as normal as a springtime ritual, a rain-charm, or the cult of the dead. Practically, the gods were real. They were meanings of the external environment. Their function in religious history we read in the clear light and can trace their development across the centuries. But thinkers came who understood the

world better and had a more adequate appreciation of the cosmic forces which influence the life of man. At that momentous point, in all religions, there came a cleavage between the god of the intellectuals and the god of the religion of the people. For the intellectuals, there was a drift toward the unification of all the gods into one single great figure or principle. The path toward the goal of unity took a different route in every historic religion, though the merely verbal or formal statement of the result has seemed to amount to the same thing in all. But even monotheisms and absolutes, indistinguishable in the language of theologians and philosophers, have differences of meaning in every religious development, and no two are identical. They may deal in abstractions, but the philosophers, as well as their gods, belong to a racial history. The thick meaning of the gods in the social history of a people is what moderns often forget when they would unify the theologies of all the world by an identity of abstract words.

If one always remembers the caution that each god had his life intimately entwined in the life of his people and that therefore what seems to be the same god, or the same type of god, may have rich and significant differences of meaning in the various religions, it may be possible to make a summary-classification of the gods of the world. First, and undoubtedly the oldest, are the great powers of nature—the heavenly gods of light, the gods of the air, especially wind and

rain, and the earth-gods. The second class grows out of these. Beginning as vegetation powers, Heaven-Earth or Father Heaven and Mother Earth, and directly concerned with fertility, some of these divine figures enact the drama of the alternate death and resurrection of vegetable life. Later they symbolize the victory of life over death, and the dying and rising vegetation god becomes the symbol and guaranty of the victory of individual life over the fact of death. The great representatives are the mother goddesses and the savior gods of the Mysteries. In a third group are the functional or departmental gods—gods of the four quarters, gods of healing or of the arts, culture-heroes, war gods, and gods of special functions. This class is very rich. Loveliest of all is the goddess of the hearth-fire.

The fourth group stands at the borderland of speculation. It comprises the creator-gods. Fifth, and more advanced still, are the mediating gods. When the great gods were far withdrawn into the supernatural realm, the link between humanity and the invisible was sometimes maintained by lesser figures, who were in immediate contact with the supreme god and also in vital relationship with man. Among them are included such diverse forms as the Gnostic Æons, the Logos, the beautiful Mithra of Iran, and the human-divine savior gods, incarnations or avatars.

The final step in religious speculation is reached in the supreme gods of cosmic scope. They are of three kinds—personal, super-personal, and impersonal. The

personal group includes familiar figures known over all the world—Jahweh of Israel, Ormazd of Zoroastrianism, the God of Christianity, and Allah of Islam. They are the working gods of folk religions.

The super-personal gods are the Absolutes, Oriental and Western. This idea of god has been the favorite of philosophers. During the last two thousand years it has laid its spell upon most of the intellectuals of the Orient. It was the final thrust of mind into the unknown, until thought turned on itself, encircling the universe. God became all-inclusive, the ineffable Reality behind the veil of earthly gropings and transiency, in whose eternal silence the souls of men find peace after their escape from the wheel of time. God is One in many, timeless, the universal soul of all, the ocean of which worlds and individuals are as waves and drops, the same in infinite forms. All lesser gods are the Absolute accommodated to the needs and capacities of men. Thus for Buddhist and Hindu, the Eternal One may be mystically met in many glorious personal beings, embodying the full perfection of love, light, wisdom, beauty, justice, and power; to help suffering, sorrow-laden humanity, lost among the illusions of the phenomenal world, the divine is incarnated again and again in human form to teach the way of life by word and example: God is all in all, touching even the lowliest and most ignorant in image, ritual, and symbol; many-named mystery, soul of all souls, in whose blissful calm the turmoil of the ages comes to rest at

last. In this idea the intellectuals found a way of harmonizing, by the witchery of words, the religious values of god and the demands of thought. Representatives of this type are the Supreme Brahman of philosophic Hinduism, the Absolute Buddha or Dharmakāya, the Ultimate Reality of Japanese Yomei, the Absolute of the Western Idealists, the God of the Sufis in Islam, and the Absolute in modern Shinto. Its votaries are a brilliant galaxy.

The third type of Supreme is the impersonal cosmic order, enfolding man and nature and the gods of man as the universal and inexorable law. To this class belong T'ien and Tao of China, Fate of the Greeks, and perhaps the ultimate causal law of early Buddhism. There are unity and security and peace in such a concept, but at the same time renunciation of much of the glow and warmth of the personal gods.

No mere classification can do justice to the gods. Through it should be drawn the thread of their living development. In awful majesty the supreme gods tower, in timeless calm, above the welter of worlds, but every one of them had a lowly birth on mountain-height, or rain-swept plain, where anxious men wrestled for the goods of life. Out of the ages of experience, out of their bitter defeat and daring dreams of life made lovely, the magnificence of the gods was made. Between the magical potency of a primitive Aryan ritual and the God who is the all-pervading world-soul there was a long human history.

To lift a simple nature power to the status of an omnipotent and perfect God of the whole universe required time and rich meanings wrung from the joy and anguish of ages.

Social history molds and colors the character of the gods. Consequently, even the Supreme Ones have their own peculiar qualities which make them particularly significant to the historic peoples to whom they belong. Jahweh is not only God; he is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, of Amos and Jeremiah. He is El-Shaddai, the companion of Israel's tortured pilgrimage, the guarantor of a nation's age-old hope. The dance of Shiva may be meaningless to the West, but to the mystic saint of India it lights up the whole world of drab, material monotony with joy and beauty. The God of the Nicean formula would have been strangely without significance, not only for Jesus of Nazareth, but for the churches of the first century. In succeeding centuries that statement was not only adequate, but the only one capable of reconciling monotheism with the salvation-value of Christ. With the passing of the old Mediterranean culture it was robbed of vitality. Anselm, Aquinas, and Calvin had to find new meaning to fit the old forms. The values of the social ideal dictate the meaning; the patterns of the social life dictate the form of the god idea. Robbed of its relationship to the life situation of a specific age and culture, an idea of god is a mere abstraction. Gods are meaningful only when they have

vital rooting in the thought and action of folk in quest of life satisfactions in the changing world. An abstract, philosophic idea of god might conceivably embrace all the gods of the great religions in a single formula and remain unaffected by the ages, but the god-ideas that function are specific and related to the problems of people in time.

In justice to the early religious philosophers, it is needful to remember that in the far past they had neither the knowledge nor the method for free construction. They rationalized religious materials sanctified by ages, and they inherited the gods. If more recent thinkers had taken the trouble to discover how the gods came into being, and their function through the years, they might not have been so willing, in defense of god ideas, to neglect the real values of life which alone gave the gods meaning. If they had paid more attention to the origin and significance of dualism in the history of religions, they would not have taken uncriticized the premise that the real world is the unseen and the beyond. Logic let loose in the realm of the unknown, and married to eloquence, may give birth to most marvelous metaphysics, but what has all that to do with the actual, factual religious quest of living men in concrete situations? Religion was always related to time and place and problems. So were the ancient gods. They owed their existence to the fact that they helped man win his values. Their dissolution was foreshadowed when they became absolute,

timeless, infinite, and ultimately unknowable. The real gods then were lost in an abstract idea. It was done to save theology and succeeded only in cutting its roots in life.

But the gods were saved, because the abstract ideas were not taken seriously in practice even by the philosophers. This is one of the most interesting revelations of the history of religions. There came a time in all cultures when thinkers could no longer accept the naïve folk-belief in the gods. Yet they, like the people, were accustomed to the cosmic support and consolation the gods alone could give. The problem was solved by evaporating the real gods in metaphysical ultimates respectable for thought, and then treating these abstract concepts as though they held the values of the vanished gods. The elements most desired were unconsciously smuggled into the idea after being logically excluded. Thus the philosopher was able to respond to his Ultimate as though it had qualities which denied its timeless indifference and absolute perfection. The gods were both kept and surrendered. It is a method ancient and honorable, and a psychological situation easy to understand.

In Oriental religions this attitude of the intellectuals made it possible to reconcile the philosophic god-idea with the folk gods. The latter were, of course, personal, finite, kindly, close-at-hand, prayer-answering gods, whose origin in time and history is clearly apparent. The masses of common men have always

clung to the useful, divine helpers. The philosophers approved the practice. For though the real truth was beyond all such limited and personal forms, the people might catch a glimpse of reality and touch the fringe of the ineffable through them. Thus in Hinduism, the impersonal Brahman, or Paramatman, might be accommodated to the needs of men in the personal Vishnu or Shiva, in the avatars, Krishna or Rama, or be manifested in the functional gods active in the work of creation, providence, and guidance, or be known through the guru as guide, or touched by the lowliest in the idol form. In the same way, the absolute Dharmakāya of Buddhism might condescend to human limitations in the beautiful, personal Buddhas, in the beneficent Bodhisattvas, in such temporal, human incarnations as Gautama, or in special, local, and functional gods. While the eternal, quiescent Absolute alone could fully satisfy the demands of thought, the personal Amitabha or the kindly Kwan-Yin were vastly more important to the millions in quest of the values of the life of bliss. For these lowly ones the gods were real. The intellectuals went beyond them but could not surrender their value.

Even in those religions which ignored the gods, turning to ultimates more fundamental, there was the same effort to find in the final meaning of the universe a support for human hopes. When the popular attitude toward personalized nature-powers lost significance for the Confucian intellectuals, the impersonal

Tao or T'ien gave the guaranty required. There is little left of the early faith when the ultimate is defined as "the immanent principle of existence, of life, of all action and evolution. Always a unit and always the same, it exfoliates into all existences and is the same in all. It is one, infinite, eternal, immutable, unalterable, homogeneous, inevitable, blind, fatalistic, unconscious, and without intelligence." But for Chucius and the intellectuals it was enough. The destiny of man was secure. In early Buddhism there was the same recognition of the futility of the old gods for human help since they, like man, were caught on the wheel of ceaseless reincarnation. Gautama passed them by to find his cosmic guaranty in the inexorable nature of Law, the Dharma or truth, in obedience to which the individual might attain to the Nirvana state of the "unborn, unbecome, unmade, and uncompounded." Contemporary with Gautama, the Jains also denied the personal creator-god and put no trust in the entrammeled deities on the wheel. God for them was the ideal quality of perfect wisdom, power, existence, and bliss, the goal of every soul's endeavor, the final character of the liberated and perfect soul. There was no longer any ultimate personal god, but, instead, a splendid symbol of the perfect nature of reality, to be realized by every soul in final salvation. It is not needful to labor this point. The hope of human happiness, which the lost gods served, still urged men on to faith. When all the warm kindliness of the personal

and popular gods was gone and in its place there remained only the conception of an impersonal fate or an abstract quality, the religious values were still read into the idea.

If a thousand definitions of God were assembled from all religions and from all the centuries, one thought would thread them all—man's trust that the universe in its deepest meaning is on the side of human ideals. They represent man's brave faith that his hope of life's fulfillment will not at the last be denied. The definitions often stand in striking contrast. Consider only two. "God is all truth, all knowledge, all beatitude, incorporeal, almighty, just, merciful, unbegotten, infinite, unchangeable, beginningless, incomparable, the support and lord of the universe, all-pervading, omniscient, imperishable, immortal, exempt from fear, eternal, holy, and the cause of all." "God is the presence, warm, all-enfolding, touching the drab world into brilliance, luring the sad heart into song, indescribable, beyond understanding, yet by a bird's note, a chord of music, a light at sunset, a sudden movement of rapt insight, a touch of love, making the whole universe a safe home for the soul." The first belongs to the Arya Samaj of India, the second voices the mystic's faith. Both drop the anchor of human hope into the unseen. Whether the statement be in terms of abstract philosophy or in pure, poetic imagery the religious attitude is the same. It is a long way from primitive man, but he set the pattern. He found

the gods; the historic cultures magnified and glorified them; the philosophers rationalized them; religious men used them. Their value was ever their serviceableness to man in his quest for salvation—for life in joyous perfection.

In the beginning they were manifest helpers in the world of everyday fact. When they took up their dwelling in the unseen, there were none to doubt their existence and their freedom to grow was enhanced. They were more and more charged with human wishes and burdened with responsibility for the success of man's ideals. They became guarantors of his unrealized hopes and dreams. Almighty Masters of the world, they promised, in spite of defeat and disaster, the final fulfillment of the perfect life. They were the source of security, comfort, guidance, providence, and peace. When this relation of the gods to the age-old quest of man for the values of life is kept in mind, all dialectical devices to save a god-idea become a waste of words. The question drops to a lowlier level. Are there gods who really help? Gods who are indifferent to human hopes, or who rest in eternal perfection beyond the call of man, are the creations of philosophers; they are not the old-time, unchallenged gods of religion. The impersonal Absolutes, the quiescent Buddhas, are without meaning for the battered and beaten swimmer in the sea of time. Ordinary religious men are not interested in retaining an Absolute, even though honored by the name of God, for which all

their struggles, their good and evil, their hopes and failures, can have no meaning as they experience them. When gods become ineffable and unknowable, it is a sign that the really functioning gods are no longer possible for thought. But a god who was really unknowable would be equally impossible for religion. To save a god-idea in a net of philosophic words and at the same time wash out all the worth of the idea is no great service to man. Hume called it the "real atheism." The necessity of abandoning the old, real gods of the people which thinkers in the older religions have felt for millennia, must end in a frank surrender of the idea of god in all its historic meaning, if the only concept which emerges is one that has no religious value, or acquires value only as the religious meanings are surreptitiously smuggled into it.

There came a time in all religions when the *real* existence of some or all of the gods was challenged. The evidence for their existence was not a problem for early peoples. The gods were self-evident. When they became spiritual beings lost to human contact in the invisible world, it was necessary to have some guaranty of their reality. But there was still no problem. The evidence was furnished by the priesthood, by revelation in miracle, by sacred book, by faith in the divine significance of great historic prophets, avatars, or incarnations, by mystical experience. Only when these failed was there the necessity of logical proof, the weakest and most frail support of all. Much

travail of the human spirit and endless theological dogmatism and controversy might have been avoided if the natural history of the gods had been known in those long-past centuries. For thousands of years the existence of the gods has been defended, doubted, and denied by men devoutly interested in the religious quest. The challenge of the gods was always in the interest of a nobler ideal. The defense of them was in the interest of religious security. Understanding the functional nature of the gods, both sides might have understood each other.

The greatest confusion of thought through all the history of culture-religions and continuing even until our modern age has been caused by the inability to distinguish between ideas of god and the existence of god. The conception of gods existing above or beyond the world is a heritage from naïve, primitive thought. Nevertheless, in the belief of men, the thousands of diverse deities, as well as demons and great personal devils, did actually exist in the unseen realm. In the light of the history of the gods, with a knowledge of the origin of the dualisms of spirit-body, natural-supernatural, few would be interested today to argue for the existence of these historic gods and devils. Their radical transformation in the evolution of religions is a great difficulty in the way of such an argument. An adjustment is sometimes made by saying that God exists as a great unknown and that all the changing ideas of all the religions of mankind are

imperfect glimpses of his ineffable meaning. This form of agnosticism is merely a refinement of primitive thinking. An appreciation of the functional and practical nature of the god-ideas makes it unnecessary. An understanding of the actual cosmic support for the values of man's religious quest makes it superfluous. During the last twenty-five centuries men have challenged or championed the gods. Understanding of them is a modern attainment.

The ancient criticism of the gods anticipated most of the arguments of the more recent centuries. There were some sophisticated ones long ago who discussed them in terms of origins. Critias, the sophist, suggested that they were created by a clever ruler who needed the help of their all-seeing eyes to control the behavior of his people. European rationalists of the eighteenth century simply transferred this honor of creation to the self-interested priests. Xenophanes was probably the first to suggest that man made the gods in his own image. The aphorism has been frequently repeated. It is not quite exact. The early gods, Sun, Moon, Heaven, Storm, and Rain had a real existence in their own right. All that was possible at that stage was to inject into these nature-forces human qualities. Only when the gods became spirits was it possible for man to make them completely anthropomorphic. Even then they were not made in man's image, but in the image of the ideal he longed to attain—a perfection of power, goodness, beauty, and bliss.

Usually the criticism was made in order to remove defective ideas of God. The long line of "atheists" of the last two thousand years and more includes very few who denied God altogether. They were men who had found a worthier idea of God, or who repudiated the God-ideas commonly held. Socrates was an atheist in this sense. So were the early Christians. So also, in modern times, were Newton, Voltaire, Locke, Hume, Spinoza, and many others. The Epicureans believed in the gods, but since they did not want them to interfere with man, they gave them a place in perfect bliss in the interstellar spaces. The Buddhist, Jain, and Sankhya teachers of ancient India did not trouble themselves to criticize the traditional gods of the people, but they did make exhaustive arguments to disprove the existence of a personal creator god or an absolute god. Their salvation ideal did not need such gods. In the same way the Chinese intellectuals ignored the personal gods of the people because of their conception of the cosmic order.

Sometimes the gods were denied outright, that life might be happier, as by the Charvakas in ancient India. Wang Chung in China of the first century devoted much labor to the destruction of the popular belief in the gods with the same purpose as that of the Epicureans in Greece—to relieve men from anxiety and fear regarding them. This interest in the people sometimes took another form. The Stoics in Greece and Rome, the intellectuals in India, Hsunn-tse and the

later officials in China, while no longer believing in the popular gods as realities, allowed them to remain for pedagogical and disciplinary reasons, as aids to political control, or "to keep the people contented and quiet." Such attitudes are typical and are a further illustration of the fact that the religious quest is more fundamental than the gods. Real irreligion lies in the intellectualizing of the gods into meaninglessness while pretending to keep them, or in the dogmatic defense of decadent and dying gods and not in the attitude of a Socrates, or of the Jains and early Buddhists, who, in abandoning the old gods, sought to find the truth that would give sure leading to the bliss of emancipation.

Really polemical atheists are usually deeply religious. This is illustrated by the Deva Samaj in modern India. Their press pours out bitter tracts in the effort to destroy the god-idea, but only because they are interested in moral responsibility and devoted to social idealism. To deny God when God must be denied, in order to clear the way for a nobler and worthier conception of the nature of the cosmic milieu which gives man courage and confidence in his search for the values of life has, through the centuries, been the task of the prophet and reformer. To glorify dead deities, or to rationalize devitalized ideas of god at the cost of obscurantism and loss of genuine values, is no service to the cause of religion. The questing life of man is the final court of appeal. The gods have had a secure place in religions because they have meant help for man in

the realization of his hopes. So long as they had vital meaning they were cherished and unchallenged. But no amount of artificial bolstering has ever been able long to save a god unaltered, after the cultural climate of ideas and ideals had changed.

It is clear that the ideas of god of the great historic religions have not been drawn from any accurate knowledge of the universe or of man's place and destiny within it. They were really products of the social life and their importance was not in any actual control of the concrete world, but in their influence upon the relations of men. They were not a way of understanding the universe, but a means of asserting the victory of human ideals in it. Their existence was not in the eternal realm, though they were given a residence there by the theologies. They were indigenous to human society, in which they lived and moved and had their being. They were given cosmic significance by attributing to them creation, providence, and purposive control over the events of historic time. To say that the god-ideas were social creations is not to say that they were illusions. They were real enough. They embodied the moral ideal and gave it social sanction. In them there was symbolized a synthesis of the ideal of the group, so that worship and devotion directed to God meant loyalty to the socially approved ideals. They were the source of courage, consolation, and peace in the dark and dismal desolation of many tragic ages of defeat in man's search for the good life. They

were a bond of unity for the earthly companions of the quest. But with these values there were also dangers and weaknesses for the human cause. Man put into god-ideas so made, all that he hoped the divine might be and then read the universe in terms of his ideal picture of god. Faith in God blurred his vision of reality. Evils were met with the resignation of blind optimism. The sickness and pains of social maladjustment were too often made tolerable by the divine anæsthesia.

With the dawn of the modern age came a new criticism more trenchant than any critique of the gods of earlier eras. Men began to consult not their wishes, but the facts; to ask regarding the cosmic support of human values, not—what may we hope? but, what do we actually find?

Chapter Five

THE PASSING OF THE GODS OF OLD

IN SOME cultures the idea of God acquired such an exaggerated emphasis that the whole meaning of religion seemed to be oriented there. This was particularly true of Christianity because of the historic stress upon doctrinal authority. In a less marked degree it was true of Judaism and Islam. God gathered into himself the whole meaning of the universe for all three, though the Jewish law and the Moslem Shariah were more important practically than doctrine. In the religions of India and China theology was a matter of relative indifference. The all-important thing was the proper behavior in established social relationships of family, community, caste, or guild. It would be utterly impossible to define Hinduism in terms of creed. Religion is dharma, the ideal pattern of daily duty. "Hinduism is that which the Hindu does." The ease with which India and China make adjustment to modern scientific thinking as compared with the long anguish of the last three centuries in Christendom is a reflection of this difference of emphasis in the religions. It is a contrast between rigidity of cus-

tom and rigidity of dogma. The growing-pains in theology are largely Western.

To keep a correct perspective one must remember that until most modern times intellectual anxiety about the nature of God was limited to a very few people. The slow drift of time and social evolution rather than logical thinking made changes in the meaning of gods for the folk. The stream of human living runs on a level lowlier than logic. The comradeship of men and women, the love of little children, the loyalties of friends, the homely familiarity of the natural world, the shared tasks, sorrow and defeat, fears and hopes, the common life with its bonds of cozy custom, its safe habits and close, comfortable contacts—these are the things which make up the realities of experience for the masses of men. The gods are like members of the group, unseen but always within call. Among some peoples they are represented by picture or image. The kitchen god of the Chinese village family is an honored member of the household. The god of wealth makes his periodic visits to the community. A Greek farmer may have many such helpers, from the patron saint of the family to the higher deities, until the God of heaven is reached. In mediæval times Europe was filled with these invisible beings, good and evil. God and Satan were the most exalted, but probably Mary and the saints were best beloved. Very friendly and close to the world of men are the invisible Kami of the Japanese wayside shrines. The

village goddess of an Indian group has a different quality, but is equally near to the soil. More exalted in rank, the adorable Krishna, or the lovely Goddess of mercy, Kwan-Yin, are real in the social attitudes of daily life for millions in India and China. All these divine figures are part of the social milieu, not reasoned about, but accepted and gratefully used. For the plain and simple people it has always been sufficient that their gods were vouched for by church and teacher, by the tales of marvelous deeds, by sacred drama and Scriptures, or by their own mystical experiences. Even when the intellectuals of Hinduism and Buddhism pushed out beyond the personal gods to the Absolute, the people were not disturbed. The god of the intellectuals was not a jealous god. There was no theological intolerance. The gods of the common folk were too intimately integrated in the patterns of life to be lost, and there was no reason to trouble them for the sake of an Eternal Reality which included them all.

In Christianity it was different. The intellectuals worked with more intractable materials. God was solitary, personal, and transcendent. This was the heritage from Judaism. The dualism between the natural and supernatural was more sharply drawn. There was a difference in essence between God and man. This was the heritage from Plato and the Greeks. Through all the centuries of Christian theology it was necessary to bridge the gulf between the world of man and mat-

ter, and the transcendent spiritual realm of God. During the ages of uncritical faith the task was not difficult, for there were many ladders leading up to God. One by one they came down as Christianity moved from the mediæval to the modern world.

First to fall was the trusted revelation authority of the Church, which crumbled under the challenge of the Protestant reformers. It was a loss more serious than men then realized, for in the final analysis the real authority of Scriptures and creeds was Church authority. Both were products of the Church.

There was an old belief that miracles were God's way of setting his seal upon his messenger. The attack of eighteenth-century Rationalism destroyed that form of assurance. Later centuries found it easier to believe in God unproven than to believe in the proofs for miracles. In their turn the deists and rationalists had what they considered a more scientific certainty of God. The Creator had attuned human nature to religion, and at the beginning there was an original natural religion of mankind. Consequently, all men have an innate idea of God. But the facts of history of religions were too well-known and Hume's criticism was too devastating. Their ladder to the unseen was quietly taken down.

There was still left the revelation in sacred Scripture. It was not long, however, until the devoted labors of scholars in historical criticism made of the Bible a living, human book. It was given vital sig-

nificance as a historical record of a religious quest, but at the same time emptied of its authority as an inspired revelation.

Though all other proofs of God might be shaken, both churchman and philosopher had been confidently certain that his existence at least, if not his nature, could always be demonstrated by reason. Hume first and then Kant took up the arguments one by one and returned the verdict in the negative. From that time, men turned for certainty in religion to the facts of human experience. Kant himself began with man. Because of the absolute quality of the moral imperative in man, he felt it necessary to postulate the existence of God. Kant was too early to know the natural history of morality and the social source of his awed respect for the moral law.

For many men of the last generation, a sufficient evidence of God was given in the experience of Christ. The argument from God to Christ, from the unknown to the known, was reversed. Christ was felt to have the value of God and to be an evidence in time and history of the nature of Deity. To Christians reared in the old tradition this was very appealing. Jesus they knew and loved. There would be complete security in a universe ruled by a God like him. But when the facts of the natural and social history of the world were faced in their stark nakedness, faith was not so easy. The difficulty was voiced in the words of Professor George Burman Foster, who once held this

position—"Oh, if we could only believe that God is as good as Jesus!"

A final resort lay in the assurance of mystical experience. For the mystic there was no need for external authority of Church, or Scripture or creed. His assurance was personal and self-sufficient. But once more the proof failed to stand objective analysis. The knowledge given in the mystic's experience was found to be no greater than that of his social environment. Joy, peace, and an untroubled confidence are the qualities of the mystic state. There is a feeling of at-homeness in the universe. This is true whether the mystic be atheist, theist or polytheist. The experience has genuine religious value, but brings back no report from the unseen.

It now seems strange that man should have expended so much mental energy in elaborating the intricate mazes of dualistic metaphysics in order to make rational the ideas of men of the primitive dawn. The idea of gods existing in an invisible realm was a part of the heritage from our primitive ancestors. Even when our modern intellectuals surrendered the supernatural, they still continued for generations to make a division in their one reality between noumenal and phenomenal, spiritual and material, another relic of the ancient age. Furthermore, though God was drawn within the universe, it was a long time before men asked frankly for an understanding of the real nature of the total reality. Rather, the universe was read in

terms of the inherited idea of God as purpose, providence, and perfection. Dualism remained. A deeper reality of absolute truth, beauty, and goodness seemed to lie in the mystery behind the phenomenal, if men could but realize it. More than a century of drifting religious philosophies intervened before men came to appreciate the relative and functional nature of the god-ideas and to take seriously into account the materials of the religious sciences. The changing ideas of god during the last few generations were the result of an effort to retain the traditional idea and at the same time come to terms with man's new world of knowledge and experience. It was still apologia and rationalizing rather than empirical analysis.

But there was change. The fact that man felt the need of ceaseless reconstruction was an indication that the issues of life were forcing their claims upon theology. The influences at work were of several kinds. During the century a new vision of the nature of the world and of the development of life emerged. Man's increasing control over the material order and his success in achieving the goods of life awakened a hope that he might win mastery over the most crying evils of the natural world and of society. He was no longer willing to "accept the universe," nor to think the worst of human nature. He dared to challenge in practice all finalities and unseen teleologies. A more sensitive response to the finer, spiritual ideals arising in an increasingly individualistic and democratic age, led to a refusal

to accept in resignation either ideas or conditions which blocked the door of opportunity for developing the higher life. There came also an enlargement of mind, by more adequate knowledge of the history of human cultures. The world of man's life in time and space passed in panorama before the eyes of the thinker. It was possible as never before to appreciate the function of religions in human history and the place of the gods in religion. Finally, there came an awed realization of the danger of drift. Science, practically applied, was a greater threat to religious values than science, as knowledge, had been to the old ideas. Man began to feel responsibility for putting intelligent purpose into history, which was a very different thing from trusting that it was already there. All these factors played their part in the transformation of the idea of God during the last hundred years.

Following the work of Kant, at the dawn of the nineteenth century the idealisms of the early Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Fichte, each in its own manner, overcame the supernatural dualism of the earlier type. God became immanent in a new sense and reality was in the realm of experience. These men saved God, as India had done before them, by transforming him into an ineffable Absolute in whose harmonious unity of being all the discords and travail of time were resolved in a symphony of perfection. Their effort was to establish a spiritual universe beyond the reach of empirical science and what seemed to them

its mechanistic threat. One significant result was the washing out of the sharp meanings of the old theologies and an abandoning of their crudities. The old terms were used, but the content was very different. Only by courtesy did the terminology of the Christian past carry the meanings of Absolute Idealism. In reality the old ideology was abandoned. The mystic feeling, and emotional or poetic language maintained the traditional values of theology, while the concrete content was evaporated. Much the same result was achieved by the premature blending of science and theology in the monistic systems of Haeckel and Ostwald.

A further step away from the past came with the emergence of the finite gods. The significance of this lies in the fact that it was not a movement of logic, but a compulsion growing out of the claims of human life. The fact of evil was forcing itself into the consciousness of man. Hume and John Stuart Mill had given voice to it almost a century before. When at last the scientific view of the world weighted the scales, the challenge came in earnest. The nature and human nature we know, seemed to be plastic, time and chance and change to be real. Man had grown more daring in the consciousness of his new powers. He was ready to throw down the gauntlet to evil, both natural and moral. The Absolute was denied and so also was the omnipotent God. To save his goodness, men were willing to sacrifice his infinite power. God became a strug-

gling captain of man's salvation, battling with the forces of evil in a vast cosmic struggle and needing the help of man to advance the standard of the good in the face of chaos and the dark. The picture has been drawn in many forms—the almost omnipotent god of the Personal Idealists, the growing god of the "piecemeal supernaturalism" of James, the groping Elan Vital of Bergson. When the wild fury of the World War wrote the fact of evil in letters of fire in the eyes of all the world, it seemed that the eve of Ragnarok had come. The finite god reached the mind of the folk at last in the popularizations of Wells and Kennedy. But with this change in the idea of God went also some of the old values. A really finite god could not furnish the perfect peace and security of the past, nor give an absolute guaranty of ultimate victory. Man began to assume responsibility for the world when the finite gods appeared.

In the discussion of recent years, the paramount place has been given to the values of human life. Even those thinkers who still defend the Almighty and the Absolute, have their eyes turned not to the heavens, but upon the mundane scene. The reconstruction of the Absolute by Royce showed the influence of social idealism. Professor Lyman's god, as Eternal Creative Good Will, is a compromise with the old theology, but at every point oriented to the problems of the everyday world. Increasingly our modern systems are compelled to give central place to human

needs, struggles, and ideals. Instead of trying to prove the existence of God, or to reduce to reasonable terms an inherited idea, the fashionable thing today is to ask in what ways the reality, in which we are immersed as living beings, gives us help in the attainment of the good life. Writing of the modern quest for God, Professor Gerald Birney Smith says: "Rightly to understand the character of that reality on which we are dependent for the richest and noblest way of living is the most important knowledge we can have. There is no way in which to acquire this knowledge save by actual experiment and experience in the art of living at one's best and asking what the mysterious universe which has produced us actually does in creating a victorious life" (*Modern Quest for God,* pp. 23-24). So also Professor Wieman: "But what is God? God is this most subtle and intimate complexity of environmental nature which yields the greatest good when right adjustment is made. God may be much more than this, but at least he is this" (*The Wrestle of Religion with Truth,* p. vi). "God is precisely that object, whatsoever its nature may be, which will yield maximum security and abundance to all human living when right adjustment is made" (*Religious Experience and Scientific Method,* p. 381). Unfortunately, he identifies his God with Professor Whitehead's "principle of concretion." The flavor of the old ontology clings to this phrase. Religion tends to become a search for adjustment to a perfect, existing

God, rather than an empirical search for the pluralistic elements of the universe which help to "create the victorious life," or which, when found, may be so organized as to be man's environmental security and support in winning the abundant life.

Professor E. S. Ames was a pioneer among American writers on religion in making the purely functional interpretation of God. Sensitive to the social and religious sciences, in his earlier writings he defined God as the symbol of our highest social values. This was exactly true to the functional nature of God as shown in the history of religions and stated in terms of the modern stress upon human interests. It gave his God just as much real existence, as a phase of cosmic reality, as Jahweh or Shiva, but no more. In his recent book he has recognized that ideals and values are integral phases of the nature of the planet itself, and speaks of God as "Reality idealized and glorified with the attributes of complete and flawless personality" (*"Religion,"* pp. 161-2). Instead of being only a magnetic star to steer by, God is a personification of those elements in the cosmic-social environment which actually give man support. This is a much more promising path in the search for a meaning for God. An Indian scholar, Dr. J. C. Ghose, turns in the same way to an analysis of the facts of the universe. Abandoning all efforts to prove God's existence, and recognizing that all theologies and philosophies of the past are obsolete, he still feels that we may, if we can, be-

lieve that God is that influence in the evolutionary process itself which aids in the achievement of the better from the good (*The Positive Religion*).

Changing gods are no novelty to the student of religions. But it is evident that the change which is taking place in the modern world is different from and more fundamental than that of any previous age. The gods of the past are vanishing. Modern men are seeking to know the real nature of the reality which determines their destinies. Instead of the agnosticism which takes the form of faith in an ineffable unknown, there is the more humble effort to know what the real and effective aids to the worthiest life may be. The idea of god meant help for man in his quest for the ideal, but it can no longer be assumed that men of the olden, long-dead days had captured the true nature of that help in the net of their theologies. Instead of asking, "Does God exist?" meaning one of the well-known gods of yesterday, instead of rationalizing and denaturing the vital concepts of an earlier generation, the question is asked direct, "What support does the universe give to our moral ideals?" Answered frankly, without bias or presupposition, in the light of the best available knowledge, this question should reveal what for modern men may function as did the ancient gods. An adequate answer would slur no phase of human experience and preserve all real values. Moreover, there would be behind it the best modern authority—the authority of scientific method. It is reasonable also

to hope that new vitality might flow into religion when it is set realistically in the actual, factual structure of the familiar cosmic order. The quest of the ages has been a search for the good life in a good world. If at last religion has become self-conscious, and able to yoke knowledge and power to the task, it may even be that the nature of reality itself may be shaped increasingly to serve the cause of man.

When the question is put in this way, the answer is at once clear and assuring. If some of the consolations of the past disappear, their very loss is valuable for a living religion. The elements of support and security, of hope and promise, which come to man from his cosmic and social environment are real and effective. They may some day be the means for the realization of his long-deferred dream.

First of all is the support of the stable balance of the natural world. This may be understood in two ways. Man himself is one phase of the natural order, the result of æons of cosmic development—an earth-child, molded and trained in body and mind, by constant interaction with environment. The human races have been so thoroughly adjusted to the nature of which they are a part, that man may justly claim to be the form of life most capable, not only of survival, but of mastery on the planet. He has achieved sufficient harmony with the forces of nature to feel secure. He is indeed the planet itself, come to consciousness and capacity for intelligent self-direction. For

modern man the physical world has become for the most part a kindly or controllable environment. Natural evils still remain an ominous shadow; but they are by far the least of the great problems of human life. Man's being is so attuned to the nature from which he sprang, and which has nursed his long racial infancy, that some of the finest emotional experiences he has are rooted in the unconscious past. Love of nature is not an affair of reason, but deeper, a more sensuous appreciation of unity with the whole of things. A modern understanding of our relation to all the manifold phases of the patterns of life borne by the great Earth Mother may add to the mystic feel of oneness. But the simple reactions are older—the joy of springtime, the soft peace of moonlit nights, the ever-new exultation at the dawn, the homely love of memory-haunted landscapes, the beauty of sunsets, or the fresh green of sunlit fields after rain. Under the starry heavens, in the presence of the grandeur of nature forces, man feels still the thrill of awe; but the waterfall sings to him, and all living, growing things answer in his own nature the pulsebeat of unconquerable life. These appreciations may be socially mediated, but they are the heritage of age-old experiences of other generations in the winning of a place in the sun and a record of joy in achievement. A mystical naturalism has its roots here.

The other phase is more prosaic and practical. Man, as a product of nature, could not be what he is, were

the environment not such as it is. On this earth alone could we really be at home. All our bodily functions are a part of its nature. The corollary of this is that a more complete understanding of the ways of nature, and of the orderliness of the material world may make it possible for man to overcome still hostile factors and to mold the natural environment into a more completely satisfying background for his social ideas. Allowed to live, where thousands of life forms failed, through his ability in blind adjustment, he may now consciously complete the physical harmonizing of nature and human nature.

A second element of support for the human quest lies in man's secure biological heritage. It is a continuation of the significance of the first, interpreted in terms of racial history. As we have already seen, the psycho-physical heritage of the normal new-born babe is the accumulation of the experience of millions of years in the development of living organisms. The child is only mediated by the existing generation. He is unspoiled human potentiality, capable of embodying the habits, attitudes, and culture of any social milieu. Decadent civilizations are merely deterrents for the hope of mankind as a whole. Tirelessly, the immortal life cells initiate in every generation an old-fresh creation. The whole of humanity is always ready for a new start, with each successive wave of child life. This also is one of the wise ways of nature, grounded in the pattern of reality, and beyond the control of any single

generation. Given the possibility of a social science that shall know how to create an ever richer and more complete cultural environment, this fresh life of each new age may rise at once to the new level, with the opportunity for progressive creative advance. In this there is hope for humanity, though it carries only a pathetic consolation and no help for the destroyed individuals of a disordered age. For the philosopher of religion, however, it is one of the habits of nature that holds out radiant promise of a happier and nobler future.

A third and, for the individual, more important phase of cosmic structure is the enfolding social environment. This is, in the final analysis, his real support, master, guide, and guarantor. It, too, is older than the individual and the generation. It is the continuously growing and conserving continuum of racial experience in civilization and culture. Thousands of years of weary toil and creative effort have entered into the tapestry of some human cultures. In the patterns are conserved the life achievements of the long-forgotten followers of the quest. The web is colored by the loyal devotion, love, and sacrifice of untold multitudes of unnamed and unknown men and women. The social purposiveness of man, seeking always the more abundant life, gives the motif. The individual is born into this enfolding milieu. He is molded by it, given his character by its varied groupings, guarded by its hard-won securities, protected by its accepted mores, mellowed and enriched by the treasured heritage of ages

of human contributions to the common store of knowledge, technique, and art, supported and challenged by the embedded ideals toward which the current of the social stream ever runs. The nature of this cultural environment varies with the people, place, age, and civilization, but, such as it is, it performs the function of support and guaranty for every individual who yields himself to its control.

It is in this social mode of cosmic life that the values and ideals of the religious quest have their secure place. Even a superficial knowledge of the gods is enough to show clearly that the human and social structure is the source from which they have always derived character and definition. Spiritual values are the tried, transformed, and tested fruitage of long centuries of experience in social living. They are evolutionary products. They too, belong to the very nature of the world. Not from any supernal or external source, neither from above nor behind the world, do they come. They are beacons, lit by human aspiration, to lead the way to a better and more beautiful life for man. Safely held in cosmic actuality, enshrined in the heart of a group, they exercise a dominant authority over individuals—commanding loyalty, giving assurance and hope. All the religions of mankind have recognized the controlling authority of these social values and ideals. To a remarkable degree they are common to all people who have advanced to the stage of culture. In the modern world, spiritual values, the ideal of happy human rela-

tionships, tend to converge for all races of men. They have never been the creation of great single individuals, though they have been enriched and often symbolized by them. They are older and more firmly rooted than the life of any age, though each new generation pours the content of its life-meaning into them. It was the compulsion of social ideals seeking complete embodiment in the individual that Professor Sugimori had in mind when he said: "I am no atheist. . . . I believe in the God I ought to become. . . . I believe in the God by means of whom I can become the god I ought to become" (*Principles of the Moral Empire*, p. 159).

The picture of man's social enfoldment, which a knowledge of the evolution of moral ideals and the findings of social psychology make ever more evident, the religious sciences confirm, by an increasing body of factual illustration. The human individual is not a solitary and helpless soul adrift on an adventure in time without star or compass. He is wrapped about with an environment of social security. If there is any complaint, it should be registered against the too great security and bondage involved. Nature has preserved her hard-won attainments on the social level by this tightly-woven network of patterns which bind securely the successive generations. Even the greatest individuals bear the stamp of the social patterns of their age. Prophets of reform, noble visionaries and dreamers, have broken their wings in vain, beating against the tyranny of the cage of custom. Not only precious

values, but injustice and wrong, may be held firmly in the "good old ways." To this complaint there is a modern answer. The scientific method may be an instrument of purposive change. It is the newest of our cultural achievements, growing out of an appreciation of the plastic nature of the world. Since a time beyond the memory of man there have been blind conflict and waste, when hungering life waged war with the injustice of established custom and institution and then settled into a new conservatism as rigid as the old. We have now won at least the ideal of social progress directed through the intelligent use of the scientific method. While only at the dawn, it gives promise that the social patterns may be so organized as to furnish for the child life of the future, as well as for the adult individual, an environment able to guarantee to them, in ever fuller measure, what they waited so long, in vain, for the gods of old to give.

The promise lies in an organization of human society in such a way as to yield to its members a full opportunity for growth into joyous living, freedom, economic security, providential care, consolation in the crises of life, wise training and guidance, a share in the racial heritage of culture now denied to the millions, escape from the tragedies of strife and war, and the recognition which flows from creative contribution to the common life. So the values of god, in the multiform quest of the ages, would become realities. To a degree which we have only recently come to realize,

the gods were the anchorage of our wishes and hopes. When in social structure there may actually exist the means for attainment of the shared hopes of the group, the values would become tangible and available for man. In social organization, if anywhere, must come the progressive mastery of evils. There, too, is lodged responsibility for assurance of full and satisfying life to every individual allowed to enter upon the adventure of living. There alone can be won the control of material and technological resources for the service of spiritual ends. There, individuals must find the guaranty of knowledge, of encouragement, of joy in creation, recognition of work well done, and comradeship in the common quest.

Religion is inclusive. It seeks a synthesis of ideals and the subjection of all specialized techniques to the single goal—the joy of life on the highest level—and it includes all men. In contrast with the local groupings of past religions, it is necessary today to think in terms of humanity and the world. This is the latest evolutionary phase. A world mind, served by the best specialized intelligence to meet problems, a world conscience, a providence, a purposive good will, integrated in concrete social organizations to serve mankind, are the next steps in social, religious evolution. In some such way, the meaning which has filled the idea of god might be made an actual, tangible reality for earth dwellers. Compensatory elements vanish. Responsibility rests upon man. The planet that has achieved

personality and intelligence in man may win through him, for so long as its life endures, the supremacy of spiritual values over the mechanistic trappings of civilization.

Strange as it may seem at first glance, there is gain rather than loss in the emotional feel of a thoroughly naturalistic view of man's relation to the planetary process. In a world organized purposively to create and conserve the conditions of the good life for man, the sense of mystical at-homeness would be heightened. Physically and biologically one with the history of his Mother Earth, the individual could feel himself also emotionally united with the deepest meaning of the world. The great souls of all the centuries, bearers of the quest through defeat and martyrdom, would speak to him with more significant voice. Loyalty to the human task and responsibility for worthful and welcome work, would blend with a consciousness of dignity and pride in embodying the highest spiritual life. Appreciation of the bonds uniting him, in a thousand tangled ways, with all the sons of men might rise to love for the companions of the way and a new sense of solidarity impossible in the divisive past, in spite of all the proclaimed ideals of religions centering in brotherhood, love and peace. His effective security in the social milieu would make each day meaningful and a long life supremely worthful, being consciously built into the growing structure of reality and a creator of values for the future.

A present, actual and satisfactory cosmic-social support for man's religious ideal is surely possible—a practical, social reality growing more perfect with the generations and real as the enfoldment of home. But possible is not actual. To call the natural-human milieu, as it now exists, even in its ideal phases, by the old and honored name of God seems like trifling with words. The name implies too much. To put a new content into the term is, as we have seen, a commonplace in religious history. To put a meaning upon the word which denies the accepted connotation in the minds of the masses of the folk has also abundant precedent in the religions of the past. The abstract ideas of philosophers and theologians denied the people's God while using the term. Greek, Roman, Hindu, Buddhist, and Chinese intellectuals deliberately took this position. But in a very crucial way our situation is different. All these ancient sages were assured of a perfect and ordered control of the universe and of human destiny. Their indifference to the manner of thinking about it, or of religious attitudes to it, was a reflection of their certainty of its reality. Today, however, the possibility of escaping the tragedies of all past civilizations and the hope of winning a joyous home for man in the world lie precisely in a frank acceptance of responsibility for achieving the control and security they took so easily for granted. When the practical values belonging to the traditional idea are actually achieved in the organization of human life, there could

be no objection to the use of the term "God" to signify the real guardian of our ideals, guide of our destiny, and center of our loyalties. But the continuation of the evolution of the planet by a social organization, eventuating in a unified world intelligence, heart and purpose, is a "must be" rather than an "is." God in this sense of unified cosmic support and leadership belongs to the far future.

In the meantime there is great confusion in the use of the term. Many argue that a continued use of the old symbol is dangerous—a handicap in the path to realization of the good life for man. Their position is purely logical, since no sufficient study has been made of the facts. They argue that in so far as a man is convinced that the world is being guided safely, he will depend upon that guidance; that trust in a supernatural weakens man when he faces extremely difficult problems, since it is so easy to fall back upon a stronger and wiser power; that the idea tends to lessen the sense of responsibility for being a providence for our fellows and therefore stands in the way of complete understanding and sympathy; that the gods of the people serve as justification for the egotism of races or religions and become sanctions for imposing their culture and "truth" upon others; that the unification of the wills of men will come more quickly when they assume full responsibility for the religious task, a task more urgent in the presence of a potentially destructive science, capable of doing endless damage when di-

rected by evil wills. There are minor charges not now so vital as in earlier days—the identification of religion with a particular institution, and a way of worship, which puts the emphasis upon proper relation to God rather than upon the integration of values in social structure; or the easy manner of relief of conscience in matters of social failure by seeking divine forgiveness; or the possibility of injustice, waste, and cruelty on the part of those arrogantly certain of being custodians of the divine authority. Who can say in regard to these things? It is altogether a question of facts and the facts are not in. The argument goes "about it and about" and is met by counter arguments equally lacking in sufficient factual support.

Some oft-repeated statements—that human nature needs God, that God is necessary as a sanction for morality, or that the motive power in religion comes from belief in God, are certainly contrary to the facts as we know them in the history of religions. Dependence on God is learned, not a part of man's endowment. If there were not the evidence of atheistic and nontheistic religions, the history of morality would show that the moral ideal had its source and sanction in the social group, both before and after the gods came to reinforce it. Moreover, the drive of human life toward desired goals has a much deeper and more vital rooting than any idea regarding the nature of the universe. Those who justify the use of the symbol today do it most effectively on the basis of pedagogical

method. They would be mediators between the old and the new. A sudden exposure to rough reality by the removal of compensatory consolations, they fear, would be disastrous for the common man. There is no difficulty in dropping devils, Satan and Ahriman. It is a relief to have them go, although the hostile forces of evil in the world would justify the use of these terms as much now as in the pre-critical past. But men would like to keep the gods, and though the old idea of god is empty, its emotional and symbolic value may serve until the term is filled with a realistic, new and modern meaning. Once more it is a question of facts. Is the transition really made? Or are the terms used with a double meaning so that instead of light and leading there is obscurantism and resigned acceptance of drift?

This is the age of all ages when it is necessary to challenge youth and the intellectuals to loyalty in the service of the ancient quest of man. Lucent sincerity and intellectual honesty are essential. The gods have had their high place as companions of the way. In the brilliant light that floods the winding paths of the historic religions, we are now able to understand and to appreciate them. By the same vision it is possible also to enter with sympathy into the religious attitudes of the multitudes for whom the gods performed their beneficial services through storm-swept centuries. But there is a deeper understanding. It is the realization that gods and institutions alike were incidental to

the end they served. More fundamental than either was, and is, the undeviating thrust of life in the human line for complete fulfillment. Modern man bears responsibility for carrying the torch of that daring dream in a world wide awake to the real nature of the task. To refuse to face the light would be disloyalty. Heroic spirits, whose names live in the hearts of men, died to break the bonds of a decadent orthodoxy in olden times. What God meant he can no longer mean. To rest in compensatory securities would be betrayal. Heir of the quest of the ages, man feels upon his mind and heart the burden of cosmic purpose. The goal is not guaranteed. No longer is it safe to wait in patient expectation that time will show the way, and to trust that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill." A good world is an achievement not a gift. Nature and the structure of society, the real bases of man's security, wait to be molded to the service of his nobler ideal. The values of God, to be actual, must be woven into the warp and woof of the organized life of the world.

Chapter Six

THE NATURE OF EVIL

WHEN the author of Revelation saw in vision the Holy City of the redeemed he was especially interested to tell us that it is free from all the old familiar enemies of human happiness. His picture of the ideal is unexpectedly illuminated by the words, "I saw no Temple there." With the passing of evil, the trappings of religion are needed no more. Religion is, because life is thwarted and denied. If the world had been made good, religion would never have emerged. The heroic quest of the ages may be read as man's persistent refusal to yield to the forces of evil or to accept anything less than the perfect life. And always the world of cruel fact has mocked at the dream.

The odds of the primitive centuries were heavily against the new, restless, questing form of being, "troubled by a spark." In the midst of the lush life of that early world, man must have seemed a sorry candidate for lordship of the planet. Yet the fire of life-hunger burned within him so steadily that he found the way through toil and tragedy, to triumph. But ever, evil hung upon his heels and haunted his

days and nights. Always he was perplexed, torn between the ought-to-be of his hopes and the actuality of his unsatisfying attainment. The shadow of frustration, the presence of active hostility to the aims of man are deeply etched into the picture of the age of dawn.

Did fear then rule the human spirit? From Lucretius to Hume this was a favorite theory to account for the origin of religion and the gods. The theory falsified the facts. Danger there was enough, and terror at times, but long before the developed form of religions as we know them, groups of men had come to terms with their world in tested custom and safe habits. Their ways of winning the needful satisfactions of life made up the body of their religions, while near to them, ready at call, were the gods as kindly and beneficent friends. One phase of all early religions was directed specifically against the active forces of evil—the protective and apotropaic devices of spell, curse, charm, and exorcism. In the presence of visible dangers our primeval ancestors were probably no more fearful than we. Against the unseen evils, creations of their imagination, they had a perfect protection in the magic spells—an imaginary cure of imaginary ills. For surer psychic peace there were always available the friendly heavenly powers of light. Dark was real danger. There is probably a deep significance in the fact that for practically every religion light is synonymous with goodness, while darkness is the symbol

for evil. Certainly there was fear and it played its part in shaping the cults, but religion, as the mastery of evil and the quest of the goods of life, was not nearly so much fear-ridden at the beginning as in some later centuries of culture.

When man had sufficient security and leisure to brood about his world, the presence of evil perplexed him. He had tasted the happiness of life; but sorrow, pain, defeat, and death monotonously marred the flowing rhythm of the days. Not until the coming of the theologians, however, did evil stare at him with the inscrutable eyes of the Sphinx. The early reaction was simpler and more naïve. It was a feeling of sad wonder in the face of uncomfortable fact. Brave songs often dropped to a minor melody weighted with pathos. Tellers of old tales remembered many quaint ways of unraveling the mystery. Perhaps woman's curiosity let loose the black bat of death and all life's ills upon the world. Perhaps the bright gods were jealous of the choicest gifts. The sages of ancient Babylonia decided that "the gods kept life for themselves, to man they gave death." Perhaps there was some wretched disobedience at the beginning of man's history to account for all the evil things in nature and in the life of man. Perhaps through some sad blunder, the magic words which fixed man's fate were wrongly spoken, resulting in irrevocable evil where good should have been. All this is resigned wonderment. It would be a mistake to think that evil entered

into the consciousness of early peoples as an insoluble problem. It was simply a disagreeable fact. Men did not then demand so much of the world and the rough vigor of living was not touched with the anæmia of theological thought. The old saga of the Norsemen may be nearer to their attitude—

> "Come laugh ye gods. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
> Ring wild through life your laughter.
> We'll laugh Ha! Ha! at the gates of death,
> And, maybe, we'll laugh after."

The rudiments of our modern classification of evils as physical or natural, and moral were already apparent in primitive societies. The organizing concepts were spirits or demons, magical power, and taboo. All kinds of unfortunate and unhappy experiences could be attributed to the activity of malicious, invisible powers. They could produce disease, pain, misfortune, or death. Even the souls of the thwarted, unburied, or unhappy dead might torment the living with physical suffering and affliction. This power was also available to the sorcerer who could sing a charm or pronounce an incantation. Many mishaps, bodily pains, and accidents might flow from the malicious use of magic power. Taboo was primarily the sign of evil flowing from violation of the safe habits and customs of the group. It was the "thou shalt not" of the early world. Great danger to the food supply, to the safety of the group, might flow from the contagion involved in thus venturing into the unknown and untried mode

of behavior. In this lies the primitive concept of "sin." It involved a dangerous contagion which required magical methods of removal. The commonest forms were washing with water, or blood, or mixtures of mana-filled fluids; passing through fire; the use of the scapegoat to carry away the contagion; exile, and in extreme cases death. In general the evils which have registered their presence in earlier religions were of these three types—physical suffering, the dread of the uncanny, mysterious, unseen forces of the environment, and the social evil resulting from breaking of the group code. Against each of them there was a psychically reassuring technique of protection.

The discordant and threatening presence of evil always overshadowed man's longing for a happy life in a good world. Only in the culture religions, when human hope thrilled to dreams of perfect joy, did it become a dread mystery and cosmic menace. It was very difficult to fit it into an ideal picture of the world. Man suffers in much the same way everywhere, and in all ages, but the emphasis falls differently upon physical or mental suffering in the various religions. Perhaps because of the early failure of the gods, thinkers of ancient India felt the fact of evil more keenly. The unsatisfying nature of endless life on the wheel of reincarnation gave rise there to the multiform religions of escape. In the Hindu texts, evils are sometimes listed. Gautama found the intolerable things to be lust, hatred, illusion, birth, old age, disease, grief,

lamentation, dejection, despair, death. The Jain list includes nakedness, discontent, abuse, begging, disrespect, slack belief, hunger, cold, heat, thirst, walking, hard-earth bed, disease, boredom, insect bites, women, thorn cuts, and dirt. A Upanishad list selects sickness, distress, fear, doubt, darkness, sorrow, fetters, passion, ignorance, sin, and death. More analytical is the classification of an ancient Sankhya thinker—evils which nature does to us, evils which other human beings inflict upon us, and evils which we bring upon ourselves by failure to understand our own nature. In whatever way the evils of the world may be classified they present a problem for the religious philosopher, since his task is to give this tragic phase of existence some rational status in an orderly universe. The religions of the world all refuse to accept evil as ultimate. They are compelled to read the deeper meaning of reality in terms of the realization of joy and perfection of life. A final optimism, or at least meliorism, dominates them all. For man, evil is a sad and somber actuality. For man's hopes, it must be overcome in the victory of the good. The interpretation of evil, therefore, varies according to the understanding of the final goal and the nature of cosmic control. There are three great types—theistic religions, non-theistic, and religions with impersonal or superpersonal Absolutes.

For theistic religions, when one supreme and all powerful God ruled the world, evil was not only a

problem but an insoluble problem. There was always the necessity of a theodice to justify the ways of God to man; for evil was a part of God's world. The end was usually a confession of agnosticism, acceptance of the inability of the human mind to penetrate the mystery, and assertion of faith in the goodness of God and in immortality. Positing a finite God only complicated the problem, for a Deity limited in power might be finite also in wisdom and goodness. Moreover, there was little relief for man in allowing God to escape responsibility for the world's ills, if it could be done only on the intolerable condition of his lacking sufficient power and wisdom to guarantee the final fulfillment of his plan. The central difficulty in all theisms lay in making God the creator of the world and interpreting the process of time as the working out of his purpose to a perfect goal. Evil then became part of the plan. Logical thinkers grasped the nettle firmly, and accepted evil as a means to larger good. Thought thus came to rest in resigned faith, but the problem remained.

Judaism wavered for a time between the theories of evil, as a power apart from God and as the creation of God. When Jahweh became the one, all-powerful God of the whole world both good and evil were attributed to him. "I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isaiah 45: 6, 7). The author of Job wrestled with

the problem—the unrelieved problem of the suffering of a good man with no hope of immortality. When an immortal life of happiness is sure, the tragedy of evil is softened, but Job had no such hope. His solution combined agnosticism and faith; the ways of God are inscrutable, but "though he slay me, yet will I trust him." The influence of the Jewish contact with Zoroastrianism appears in the idea of Satan, who took the burden of immediate responsibility for evil in the everyday world, but the ultimate control was always lodged in the Creator.

Christian theology has been forced to put evil within the plan of God in creation. The implications of that ultimate responsibility were covered by the doctrines of Satan, man's free will, disobedience, fall, corruption of nature and sin, which involved the whole salvation program. In the classical theological systems the question was handled fearlessly in terms of the absolute will of God. All was included in the eternal plan of the Creator, even before the beginning of the world. The moral evil of men who were created to be eternally damned was a dark, dread mystery, without meaning. It was mellowed somewhat by saying that not even those redeemed had any claim on God; and in regard to the lost souls, God did no more than withhold from them the necessary redeeming grace. This was heroic treatment of the problem, but logical on the premise of an absolute Creator. For modern Christianity it has proved too strong a doctrine. The day

of absolute monarchs is past. There is a constant effort to relieve God of responsibility for evil, even at the great risk of making him finite. The necessity of free will, which was the source of moral evil according to theology, is another method of alleviation. But this fails, because its only purpose can be the production of persons who are so perfect as to will only the good, and they might have been made so at the beginning. If, otherwise, they still possess free will in the sense of being able to will good or evil, then moral evil may continue forever and God's plan end in futility. Even against God, men are now daring enough to assert that human beings cannot be used as mere means; that God may not will evil as a means to his revelation or for his own glory. Thus the beautifully logical systems of historic Christian theism face shipwreck on the dark rock of evil.

Few religions have followed so ruthlessly the logic of the absolute, personal God as Islam has done. In the Al-Ashaari orthodoxy evil found its complete justification in the will of the Almighty. God not only willed other forms of evil, but sin as well. The Koran supports this view. "Whatever misfortune befalleth you is sent you by God" (Surah 42). "He will lead into error whom he pleaseth and he will direct whom he pleaseth" (Surah 16:95). The rationalistic Mutazilites could not accept a God so like a desert sheik. They laid responsibility for moral evil on man's free will. Other evils, such as adversity, sickness, and

death, might come from God, but they were disciplinary, a means to good, and will be made up for in the blessedness of eternity. A later form of Islam, influenced by neoplatonic thought, found expression in the Sufi poetry. For those mystic singers evil was negation, non-being, simply an absence of the good. The various phases of Christian thinking are repeated here.

Zoroastrianism escaped the problem of evil by positing two eternal beings—one good and one evil. All forms of evil over the whole area of space and time could then be treated as the creations of Ahriman. Unfortunately, this simple interpretation by the classical orthodoxy of Iran is being spoiled by contact with other religions and their solitary, supreme gods. Like the devils of all the world, Ahriman has now been denied. One school interprets evil as the result of an unworthy thought in the mind of the good God; another prefers to preserve the eternal goodness of God by making man altogether responsible for evil. Thus Zoroastrianism is drawn into the snare of the theistic dilemma.

Beyond the personal gods is the Absolute. When the religious philosophies reach this high level, both good and evil, as men experience them, vanish in one harmonious perfection. In Hinduism and Mahāyāna Buddhism real Reality, as Paramatman, or Dharmakāya, is beyond all relativities and distinctions. From that eternal standpoint evil is unreal. As in the abso-

lute idealisms of all the world, there is a dual viewpoint, that of the changeless and eternal Absolute and the view of phenomenal beings in the whirl of temporal events. The ocean of reality is static; its waves of human generations may be sunlit or tortured in the agony of storms. Evil for man must ever be something different from the same evil fact seen from the standpoint of the eternal. Logically, then, existence in the illusory world of time is itself evil, and religion a quest for escape to the blissful Real. Nevertheless, the analysis of the specific ills of life is clear enough in Hinduism. Greatest of all, however, is bondage to the wheel of endless rebirth. Karma dominates the time cycle, but each individual determines his own fate. Both moral and physical evil are woven into the pattern of a cord that winds through the centuries; yet in perfect justice, the fruit of deeds is eaten in sorrow or joy by the doer. Only beyond the puppet play of time is real being and peace. Ignorance of the way of release is the ultimate evil. Religion shows the way. It is noteworthy that in these systems of uncreated and beginningless universes, no God is responsible. There is no need for a theodice. There is no sin in the Western sense. Karma belongs to the individual and is his lonely sadness and responsibility. Fortunately, great personal gods who are themselves far advanced on the way of release from the wheel, reach out, in Buddhism at least, to help their fellow-pilgrims of the quest.

In the same background of thought-patterns are set the non-theistic religions of India. As a religion of release, early Buddhism concentrated upon the fact of evil as suffering. The beginningless, endless flow of karma-controlled existence involved both gods and men in its unhappy toils. Gautama saw all existence marred by transiency and misery. "Birth, old age, disease, death are painful. Union with the unloved, separation from the loved, are painful. Unsatisfied craving is painful. The constituents of being are painful." The causes of ill are craving, ignorance, and the illusion of "me" and "mine." On this basis, his gospel offered a way of life which broke the threat of the karma law, gave joyous peace in this life and blissful Nirvana beyond.

Evil, for the Sankhya philosophy, was rooted in illusion, a failure clearly to apprehend the true nature of the soul. Evil belonged only to the experiences of the psycho-physical organism in time. Both the psychical and physical nature of the individual were altogether matter, while the soul belonged to another realm of reality. From the standpoint of the soul, evil was unreal, and ceased to exist when, freed from illusion, the soul realized the true knowledge of its own being. Thus the absolute soul of the Vedanta and the individual soul of the Sankhya meet on the same ground. The Sankhya philosophers denied the Absolute, but their soul was a miniature copy of it in

eternal static perfection. Springing from *avidya* (ignorance) evil, for both, was in reality unreal.

The non-theistic Jains united the soul with the karma-ridden body on the weary round of transmigration, but, like the Sankhya, asserted its eternal and perfect status. All evil was a matter of bodily karma. "So long as man identifies himself with his material body there is evil for him. Good and evil have no existence for the perfect soul." Religion became a quest for freedom from bodily bondage involving evil, that the soul might enjoy eternally the blissful state of its true being. In all these non-theistic systems there was no necessity of explaining away evil nor of justifying it. It was simply a fact for which the solitary soul must accept full responsibility. The door of escape was always open.

Classical Chinese thought, both Taoist and Confucian, had complete faith in the perfection, even goodness, of the cosmic order. In this type of naturalism, however, evil was not treated as unreal. It was the practical result of human refusal to become a submissive and active instrument of the Tao. Some of the Confucian sages traced even the disorders of nature to the failure of man to fulfill his proper duty, in his given place, in the orderly structure of the world. The concept of sin does not appear. Suffering was the consequence of violation of the Tao, and blessedness the reward of perfect naturalness—a life lived in

a society harmoniously oriented to the order of heaven and earth.

Even so swift a survey is sufficient to show how manifold have been the interpretations of evil and how they are related to the religious interpretation of the ultimate nature of the universe. Though evil is as real as the beneficent phases of the world with which man deals, religions have always weighted the scales with faith on the side of the good. During all ages they have viewed reality through the colored glasses of their hopes. In spite of their disillusionment, even the Charvakas and Epicureans could say, "Evil may be endured, good may be attained." The struggle of thinkers to find a place for this element of irrationality, in a world assumed to be orderly, may be seen by setting side by side a few of the characteristic interpretations: evil as embodied in a personal, spiritual power; as a necessary phase of existence overcome in the good; as a stimulating and disciplinary element necessary to the realization of virtuous, free wills; as an intractable quality in the material stuff of creation; as lack of harmonious adjustment to the cosmic order; as illusion and unreal; as existence in the bodily world; as negation or absence of the good; as simply unhappy experience to be endured.

The face of evil overlooks the human scene. Never was it possible for any religion to forget, for long, the menace or the mockery of that mysterious presence. It was the Nemesis of a dream too daring. It

was the penalty of man's reach for the joys of the higher life. The more his desires multiplied, the more he was exposed to the shafts of suffering. His hopes ever outran his powers. There was no adequate means of mastery over environment available for early religions. Man was only one of many forms of life striving for existence in a conflicting welter of purposes. He had no effective knowledge either of the world about him or of his own nature. His religious ideas and groping methods of control tell that story plainly. The pathos of his failure is written indelibly into his sacred song, his prayers, his sorrowing lament over the futility of all human effort and the emptiness of life. It is reflected in his glorious dreams of a better world where all his hopes of happiness would come true. In spite of suffering, man could still sing and dream. But in the world of actuality, lacking both tools and knowledge, he was continuously the victim of drought, hunger, cold, storm, pestilence, disease, floods, destruction by hostile animal life, hardships and lack of comfort through faulty technique of control. Socially he was subject to greed, injustice, cruelty, war, servitude, oppression—all the long list of social evils that have been condemned by the ideal moral codes of the race. Kingdoms rose in smiling promise and crashed into ruin and decay. There was no wisdom available to guide. The recurrent wastage of civilization produced some of the great prophets of world denial, as well as many compensa-

tory dreams of super-earthly realms beyond the ravages of time. Sobering memories speak to modern man amid the wreckage of these long-lost splendors. But there is a new light in his eyes. He walks in the worn highways of the world with new hope, for today, evil, both natural and social, faces the challenge of a new instrument—the method of science.

There is also a new understanding of the nature of evil. It is no longer a metaphysical problem. Religion "coming of age" faces the world neither with blind optimism nor with blank despair. When even the gods are challenged by the fact of evil, it is a sign that the many modes of theological interpretation of the past no longer act as psychic anæsthesia nor even help to patient resignation. William James expressed the modern attitude. "The way of escape from evil is not by getting it *'aufgehoben'* or preserved in the whole as an element essential but 'overcome.' It is by dropping it out altogether, throwing it overboard and getting beyond it, helping to make a universe that shall forget its very place and name" (*Pragmatism,* p. 297). The difference is partly due to man's realization of his increasing power of control, but more to his new knowledge of the natural history of the world. On a planet which has produced the various forms of life revealed by its geologic and historic record, evil, for any one of them, is relative to the nature of the environment and its capacity for adjustment or control. The test of adjustment is satisfaction

of the desires of the life pattern of the organism. For one form of life satisfaction was won only at the cost of some other form. Many types met the ultimate evil—extinction. There is more than poetic truth in Tennyson's "Nature, red in tooth and claw with ravine." Blood stains the record, in the ancient past and now, but mutual aid was there, too. Life early learned to overcome many threatening dangers by alliances, by protective devices, by coöperation. More effectively than his intelligence, man's group unity lifted him to the van of triumphant life. His religions were coöperative quests for values to be shared by every member of the group. It was religion, compensatory, world-denying, drunk with faith, that through the centuries of defeat kept burning for men the torch of hope that ultimately wrong and evil might be overpassed. It is religion now, a self-conscious revival of the quest of the ages, that turns once more to the ancient task of mastering evil in the name of the higher life of man. In social idealism, it is a return from heaven to earth, from dreams of golden ages to prosaic actuality. Evil is a fact of protean form to be met by understanding through analysis and, in the light of the ideal adjustment, if possible, overcome.

Evil falls into two great classes—natural, and social or moral. The first comprises all those elements of the natural environment dangerous or hostile to the form of life activity which man represents. The second is created by maladjustments in human rela-

tionships. And the second is the source of most of the unhappiness that modern man endures.

In natural evil, so far as we can now foresee, there are elements which are irreducible. Man has no power to guide our solar system among the stars. But the Phœnix-like death and rebirth of suns a million million years in the future is not an acute anguish for the average, mortal man. Nearer to him is the fact of his own mortality. There seems to be no escape from this ruthlessness of nature in sweeping the generations into the silence of death. Though philosophized as a boon for mankind, it nevertheless remains for the individual a sinister fact, in a world which has not yet learned how to give to every man a full life of creative joy and a mellow age of memory. The true pathos of this ineluctable fact, and the poised courage which alone can meet it, Edwin Arlington Robinson speaks in his "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford" (*The Man Against the Sky*, pp. 59-60, Macmillan—1916).

> "Your fly will serve as well as anybody,
> And what's his hour? He flies, and flies, and flies,
> And in his fly's mind has a brave appearance;
> And then your spider gets him in her net,
> And eats him out and hangs him up to dry.
> That's Nature, the kind mother of us all.
> And then your slattern housemaid swings her broom,
> And where's your spider? And that's Nature, also.
> It's Nature, and it's nothing. It's all nothing.
> It's all a world where bugs and emperors

Go singularly back to the same dust,
Each in his time; and the old, ordered stars
That sang together, Ben, will sing the same
Old stave tomorrow."

Less universal in their incidence for the masses of men are the destructive forces of a still restless planet—earthquake, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, the violence of storms. They do not constitute a very large percentage of the evils for a generation of mankind. All these are old familiar phases of the world. None of them, not even glacial eras, could daunt the conquering life of man. The effect of drought, the dread of cold and storms, the fear of lightning bolt, are registered in religious cults. But these more spectacular threats of the Earth Mother are in reality the lesser evils. Other forms of natural evils are nearer to us, more stealthy, and a greater threat. Treated in the old religions as the work of spirits or demons, they are now classed as diseases, effects of the malignancy of various forms of living organisms, defective bodily structure, especially defective nerve or brain structure. Against them now, in place of charm, exorcism, and prayer, there is arrayed the increasingly effective understanding and technique of the sciences. If natural evil were his only menace, modern man might fare forward toward the future, lifting a confident song of triumph.

Unfortunately, the great group of social evils is the larger, comprising almost all the elements that make

life unsatisfying. Maladjustment in social relations is responsible even for much of the purely physical suffering of the world. It is in happy, human relationships that the ideal of the good life is always visualized in religions of culture. All the heavens are places of joyous, harmonious comradeship. With the passing of primitivity, the spiritual values of the higher life received always the supreme place in the human quest. But moral evil baffled every age.

On this level, history reveals a discouraging paradox. With greater ability to satisfy his wishes, with higher culture, man found himself entangled in a more complex social web with an increase in the evils of personal maladjustment. Some of the wisest seers of the Orient gaze, skeptical and aghast, upon the endless complexity of the civilization created by the instruments of Western industrialism and its threatening train of evils—the cheapening of man, the exploitation of weaker peoples, poverty, hovels, strife and war. "The test of a civilization," says Tagore, "is, how much has it evolved and given expression to the love of humanity by its laws and institutions" (*Sadhana,* p. 111). The paradox is easily explained. It was not that the religious ideal of the good life had altogether vanished. The difficulty was rather that man's material mastery outran his social science and powers of social control—a difficulty accentuated wherever religion escaped responsibility for making a

good world here, by postponing the good life to another world or to a future age.

All the old terms for moral evil have an authoritarian flavor—wrong, as violation of the "ought" of a group; sin, as trangression of the will of God; crime, as contravention of the legal code of a community. All are relative and the categories get confused. In swiftly changing societies, their authority adds to suffering by creating imaginary evils. Sin becomes a meaningless term for groups without a personal God. The contrast between wrong and sin, sin and crime, crime and vice in culture groups is often striking. The larger meaning of moral evil is maladjustment, and an individual who could be branded by none of the old terms might still be a victim of moral evil. Situations which deny satisfaction and thwart the creative potentialities of the individuals spell evil. The higher the culture, the more sensitive may persons be to suffering. Satisfying adjustment of personal beings in social structure is still an ideal. Farther removed is the society coöperatively self-selected for self-fulfillment, with a conscious method of adjustment of conflicts in the light of a shared quest of recognized values. Complete adjustment must ever be a flying goal.

Our complex, modern civilization has multiplied the number and the seriousness of social ills resulting from the conflict of desires. The rivalry of man with man, group with group, nation with nation, and race with race grows more menacing because of the paro-

chial aspect of the earth and the amazing development of instruments of power. Titanic forces toy with the lives of men. Selfish groups drive to their objectives over the broken hopes of their unknown victims. More brutal than the struggle of primeval monsters is the clash of imperialisms in modern war and equally devoid of control by any intelligent idealism. This is "man's inhumanity to man." The major evil confronting modern religions is the conflict of purposes of organized groups, extending from the village community to the arena of international affairs. No single individual can visualize its manifold ramifications. It presents the supreme challenge to the human quest.

Superadded to these evils are those which result from the faulty orientation of individuals in society. This is partly a failure of education, but more, the result of displacement and dislocation produced by the rapid development of machines and labor-saving devices. The burden is lifted from the backs of men, the goods of the world increase apace, but instead of leisure and enhanced welfare, there are fear, privation, and suffering for all too many of earth's millions. Yet the religious ideal clearly proclaims, has always proclaimed, the supremacy of human values over all the material instruments of civilization. Strange, that a callous and indifferent industrial mechanism should now so easily close the door of opportunity for the higher life in the faces of men!

Still another form of evil results from the dis-

organization of the psychic life of the individual either because of conflicting social controls or through the struggle of imperative desires against the ideals of a group relationship. The complexity of groups in the modern world, and their conflicting ideals, make the achievement of a unified and strong personality more difficult than in the simpler world of yesterday.

The one heartening thing is that we now recognize that evil has nothing ultimate about it. Taken naturalistically, the world and human nature are in the making. Both may be changed. Evil is a contingent and separable element, and therefore subject to removal by intelligent adjustment of personal relations. Escape from the shadow of an unknown cosmic force of evil, from the idea of an inherent taint in human nature, from a resigned acceptance of evil as a necessary moment in a universal harmony, has removed the most sinister characteristics of any specific evil for modern man. When its true nature is brought home to the minds and consciences of men, the quietistic, *laissez-faire* attitude toward it may give way to an acceptance of common responsibility for its removal. It will then become, for religion, "a challenge and a task."

Both natural and moral evil promise to yield to larger knowledge directed by good will. The same instruments of science that have made a chaos of the simple civilizations of the past, may also serve to build the better world. The failure is in religious

idealism. There has been no unified social vision to set the stakes for the use of the new mechanical and natural sciences. The vision of the quest of the ages grows clearer now. To the social sciences we are turning for clarification and for knowledge—knowledge of human nature, of methods of analysis of social situations, methods of control and organization which will obviate or remove the recognized maladjustments of our social relations. Idealism is sobered by knowledge. Utopias are outmoded. There is no longer a search for panaceas. In a growing and changing world there will always be problems and new forms of evil. But there is no threat in this prospect since we have the hope of achieving a scientific method of adjustment of crisis situations as they arise. A method of meeting and overcoming maladjustments is more important than any specific cure.

Religions are entering upon a new phase of their history. Fatalism and blind faith, resignation and blind optimism, belong to the older order of the world. Instead of escape and compensation, there is now courageous and confident acceptance of human responsibility. The age has become too dangerous for drifting. Instead of flight, modern religions prepare for battle. To the skeptical and disillusioned spectator of the human scene this is not the least of the wonders of the new age. When evil is faced realistically as removable, a method may be found for the actualizing of social ideals.

Chapter Seven

THE RELIGIOUS IDEAL

THEY were logical men of the olden time who felt that the gods must have made the earth and life ideal at the beginning; that there was a golden age at the dawn of human history. Artists of perfection, even though working with intractable material, the gods could hardly have been satisfied with the disfigured and tortured world of later times. So thought the makers of old myths. Wise philosophers have thought so, too. In the Semitic world, in Greece and India, the theory of progressive deterioration helped to make religious faith more reasonable. Belief in a golden age in the past was an aid to faith in a glorious future ideal.

Much more worthy of wonder and admiration is the actual rôle of man in the unfolding panorama of time. In that toilsome climb of the race from subhuman deeps there was no ideal beginning, but a brave battle against terrific odds for an ever more secure existence and ever nobler values. The driving power and central meaning of all religions may be found in the quest for the satisfactions of human needs in the presence of a partly helpful, partly hostile, and partly

indifferent environment. Man colored the world with his wishes and overpassed the borders of possibility with his beliefs. The heroic thing is that he refused to yield to defeat. Through the generations he kept faith with the racial dream of winning through to the ideal of a shared and satisfying life.

The specific values of the good life, the means of their attainment, and the location of the desired goal are endlessly varied. There is a constant shift in every religion. In the shaping of the ideal there are three controlling factors—the demand for ever higher and nobler satisfactions, the fact of evil, natural and moral, and the fact of human failure, man's lack of ability to realize his ends. Throughout, he clings to his vision, reshaping it to meet inescapable necessity. Religions are always optimisms even when they seem most despairing. They embody man's best hope. Brute experiences forced all religions into compromises. The yea-saying groups who demanded everything from the world were tamed by time, but their claims were not reduced. The hour and place of fulfillment only were altered. Underlying all the manifold modes of the religious ideal is an elemental thing—man's dream of happiness in a world that denied his dream. A survey of the forms taken by the ideals of the great religions in history is the surest way to appreciation of the pathos and beauty of man's hope of life fulfillment.

In all early religions the ideal was very simple,

since it involved only the satisfactions of the fundamental needs of the group life. No primitive group consciously formulated its desired values. In the process of living they were central and the whole structure of cult and ceremony, of customs and attitudes, clustered about them. They consisted of food, shelter, safety, sex satisfaction, protection from the mysterious dangers of the unknown environment, group loyalty and play. Through ages longer than we may know, these basic values shaped the development of all the religions of mankind. They have remained fundamental even when, in societies of culture, the values of the higher life take the central place in the religious ideal.

Some religions remained consistently loyal to a this-worldly social ideal. To physical and material satisfactions were added the spiritual values arising from the refinement of human relationships. The classical Chinese conception of blessedness is the best example. Blessedness meant health, wealth, long life, virtue, and a good death, the last sometimes explained to mean one's life goal attained before death. The virtues were gathered into a synthesis in the word Jen, perfect virtue, which Confucius interprets by the phrase, "to love all men." The integration of the social ideal in the natural order of the world is the distinguishing characteristic of the classical religion of China. Through all the war-torn centuries, the Confucian literati kept their feet firmly placed on the earth.

World-flight and world-denial did not touch them. Their resolute refusal to turn their eyes to another world, in spite of all the alluring appeals of Buddhism, is an interesting fact of religious history. The probable explanation is that Chinese society reached a high level of culture as an agricultural economy in an unusually fertile land. Undisturbed by tragic disorders for more than a thousand years, they worked out their religious world-view and social ideal of this-worldly peace, prosperity and blessedness. When troubles came, conservative loyalty to the past acted as an anchor. Their hope lay in a return to the idealized social order of Yao and Shun rather than in a flight to the beyond.

The Jewish ideal was also this-worldly. It was identified with the social destiny of a nation. In contrast with the Confucian naturalism, there was for this people a powerful, personal God in the heavens. Jahweh, God of Israel, was their champion. They trusted that he would bring to reality an era of justice, righteousness, and peace, in which all worldly goods would be secure, and life so happy and holy that all nations would be attracted to it. When disaster came, the ideal was not surrendered, but projected to a future age, in which God's Messiah would establish the kingdom. It was still altogether this-worldly—a happy, earthly home for man. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit

every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:3, 4). The scattered people, in the tribulations of the dispersion, waited with patient longing for the day of Messiah's coming. Their faith read the meaning of world history as the unfolding of the will of God and the sufferings of his chosen people as a significant contribution to the realization of the ideal. Thus they kept both pride and hope. Even for the dead there was hope, for they were to be included in the joys of the coming age by bodily resurrection. Modern Reform Judaism has dropped the Messianic elements and has universalized the ideal to include the human race. Israel's mission, therefore, according to the Reform movement, is to hold men steadily to the task of establishing the kingdom of God as the goal of history, not a kingdom in another world, nor individual salvation in a life of eternal bliss, but a kingdom of truth, justice, brotherhood, and peace on this earth.

The early Moslem picture of the Gardens of Paradise was clearly the projection of a wish. Influenced by Christianity and Judaism to postpone it to an after-death era at the end of the world, the Prophet of Islam included in Paradise all the things dear to the heart of the desert tribesman. There the faithful ones will find rivers of sparkling water, rivers of milk, rivers of wine, rivers of clarified honey, and all manner of fruits. "They shall dwell in gardens of delight . . . reposing on couches adorned with gold and precious

stones, sitting opposite one another thereon. Youths which shall continue in their bloom forever shall go round about to attend them, with goblets and beakers and a cup of flowing wine; their heads shall not ache from drinking, neither shall their reason be disturbed; and with fruits of all sorts which they shall choose and the flesh of birds of the kind which they shall desire" (Surah 49:16, 17).

"And there shall accompany them fair damsels with large black eyes resembling pearls hidden in their shells, as a reward for that which they shall have wrought. They shall not hear any vain discourse or any charge of sin, but only the salutation—Peace! Peace! And they shall repose on lofty beds. Verily we have created the damsels of Paradise by a peculiar creation and we have made them virgins, beloved by their husbands, of equal age with them for the delight of the companions of the right hand" (Surah 56). The tradition of later orthodoxy refined and magnified the glories of the Garden of Eternity and graded its rewards. Later rationalists and philosophers found it impossible to believe so boldly. Omar Khayyám contemplated the early vision with a sad smile. The Sufi Mystics and intellectuals replaced it with an immortality of peace and happiness.

Almost a millennium before Islam drew her crescent around the Mediterranean, the peoples bordering on that inland sea had witnessed the rise of another

ideal in the mystery religions. It was the hope of an individual immortality of eternal happiness through union with a saving God. A world in process of change, when old religions and state cults were dissolved and ancient securities vanished, gave rise to it. Lonely individuals, uprooted from their religious heritage, tormented by uncertainty and a distrust of life, found peace in the projected hope of a blessed, eternal life.

Christianity grew as a fresh plant rooted in the soil of old religions. The early Christians seem to have carried over the Jewish vision, in the form of a kingdom of God on the earth, an ideal of a perfected human society divinely inaugurated and guaranteed. Blended with it, however, was the Mediterranean hope of individual immortality, that all believers might share in the coming kingdom. The centuries brought disillusionment and a dimming of the bright faith of the Fathers in an earthly era of perfection. The ideal was then projected to a heavenly realm. There the individual was guaranteed a life of eternal joy. It was a picture of perfect happiness in human relationships.

This other-worldly ideal at times was so dominant as to lead to asceticism and world-flight. While the Catholic Church was in control, the effort was made to keep the future ideal related to human responsibility and moral living, but with varying degrees of success. The Church with its technique for saving men

to an immortal bliss in heaven seemed always a divine insert in a transient and unworthy world. Some Protestant ideals were altogether other-worldly. With the coming of modern science and the new age of industry, the result of the projection of the religious ideal to another world was tragic. It allowed the whole mechanism of modern civilization to develop without the control of religious idealism. The churches never ceased to condemn in eloquent words the neglect of spiritual values and the brutalizing of human lives, but the stress upon a heavenly goal and upon religion as a personal relationship to God, took the energies of organized religion out of the field of politics, business, and social control. When Christianity now at long last returns to the task of embodying its ideal of the good life in society, its interference is resented. A religion that has specialized so long in dealing with the supernatural world finds it difficult to regain an effective control in this world. Other organizations, with their vested rights and special purposes, only too sadly lacking in social idealism, shape the lives and destinies of men.

In the early religion of Iran there was a simple and natural picture of a continuation, after death, of the life on earth, with the addition of all the things longed for and unattained. With the coming of Zarathushtra and the vision of the universe as a vast battle ground of the forces of good and evil, the ideal per-

fecting of life was postponed until the final victory of the good under the leadership of the last savior, Sayoshant. In the meantime, mortals must continue the cosmic struggle while souls of earlier generations wait in hell or heaven or the neutral Hamestaken for the dawning of the day of triumph. Then will come the dissolution of the old order, a purification by fire of all the souls of men, a new heaven and a perfect earth, in which evil will be no more, and peace, beauty, and joy will be eternal.

The transformation of the ideal of the good life in the religions of India is a surprising thing. It seems at first glance to be a complete reversal. Men of a vigorous, Aryan stock, spreading wide their arms to say "yes" to life, produced an intellectual aristocracy who turned their backs in complete world denial. But their denial was in reality a magnificent affirmation on another level. In the beginning, they were happy in their mastery of the world. Their demands were for the simple satisfactions of the nomad group life. With the help of the bright gods and their own strong arms, they lived happily and well. Like their cousins in Iran, they hoped for a prolongation of life after death in Varuna's heaven, where existence would be still more satisfying. They pictured it as a super-earthly Paradise.

"Make me immortal in the place
Where loves and longings are fulfilled,
The region of the ruddy sphere,
Where food and satisfaction reign.

"Make me immortal in the place
Wherein felicity and joy,
Pleasure and bliss together dwell,
And all desire is satisfied."

—R. V. 9: 113, 10-11.

With culture and sophistication the early ideal lost its glamour. Under the influence of the ideas of karma and reincarnation, they developed a distrust of life. Endless immortality on the earthly round of rebirth, with its transiency and inescapable sorrow, became an intolerable prospect. Heaven was still good but being infected with karma, and therefore with transiency, it no longer offered a permanent refuge. They went beyond it to a more satisfying goal, an existence of complete bliss, transcending all earthly consciousness. It was usually described as Sat-Chit-Ananda, perfection of being, of consciousness and bliss. The later religions were all ways of attaining the new ideal. This flight to eternal peace beyond the weary wheel of time has often been called pessimism. It is rather an absolute optimism, built on complete world renunciation.

In spite of its jungle-like confusion of form and idea, Hinduism is a unity. All systems converge toward the same ideal—the realization of Sat-Chit-Ananda. They may differ in logic and in theory of knowledge. They may be atheistic, theistic, dualistic, monistic, or pluralistic. They may be far apart in their methods of winning salvation, but the goal is one—a state of bliss beyond this time-world tangled in the net of karma. Moreover, a foretaste of that peace and joy is

given in this existence. Instead of wrestling with the hard facts of evil that life in the time cycle might be happier, instead of criticizing the karma-transmigration concept, religious dreamers of India, as of so many other defeated cultures, turned for peace to an ideal realm of reality untouched by time and change. So daring and splendid was the Indian dream, that it became a perfect anodyne for the sorrows of life. Still more, the blissful beauty of the true reality transmuted, for the believer, the dull pain and monotony of this world into joy or peace. Doors opened on every side to the temple of truth. For even the lowliest and most ignorant there was a way to the home of bliss. Never was there anywhere else such complete world denial, never such an absolute affirmation of the right of every last human soul to ultimate happiness and perfection. The assumption always was that a true understanding of one's own deepest nature would reveal that man, even in the world, was not really of it. Beneath the islands of individuality was the changeless unseen unity of Being obscured now by the restless waters of the ocean of time.

One of the oldest of India's religions of release, without dependence on God or cosmic purpose, maintains after twenty-seven centuries its ancient faith in the ideal. A modern Jain scholar issues the ecstatic appeal—"Come up, then, to the Adytum of the great and glorious divinity, your own blissful self, to claim your birthright, the Ananda, by fulfilling the condi-

tions of the pledge, so that by its addition to the Sat and the Chit which you already enjoy, you may yourself become the perfect Sat-Chit-Ananda which you, in very truth, already are in essence" (*The Key of Knowledge*, p. 1096).

In its earlier form, Buddhism opened an individual way to blissful Nirvana ignoring the gods and their heavens, priests, and prayers and sacred rites. Even in this life, the emancipated person could know the joy and calm of eternal release. Later Buddhism was accommodated to the Hindu social mind. Though the objective was ever the realization of bliss, there were several paths to the goal—a personal attainment of Nirvana by moral self-mastery in a way of living, or a mystic union with the Absolute Buddha by a way of knowledge, or a progressive mounting through successive lives to Buddhahood by a way of loving works, or a trustful acceptance of salvation in the Western Paradise by the way of faith.

Hindu intellectuals inclined always to place the ideal in realization of the soul's oneness with the Absolute. This is Sat-Chit-Ananda. While the monistic Vedanta is the classical philosophic mode, the dualistic Sanhkya and the pluralistic Vaisheshika define the quality of reality and of final perfection in precisely the same terms. The ideal is the same, though the paths may wander deviously to their final place of meeting. Even popular Hinduism with its personal saviors, and its realistic heavens offering to simple people the

human delights denied on earth, points beyond them to the all-enfolding, ineffable bliss of the perfect All-Soul.

In contrast with the great believers who imposed their noblest dreams by faith upon the universe, there have been men in all cultures who clipped the wings of their hopes and built a more modest ideal in the everyday world of fact. Though life might not be altogether lovely, they made the best of life. With no hope of help from gods, and no faith in life immortal, the beauty of human comradeship became more precious. They exalted virtue, loyalty, and friendship. A sober type were the Epicureans. The Charvakas of India were more boisterous and carefree. Mocking the priests, laughing at the gods, ridiculing the idea of immortality either in heaven or on the wheel of transmigration, they were unwilling to spoil the joys of life by wailing about the inevitable evils of the world. So also Yang-chu in China counseled a pact of peace with Fate, and a happy acceptance of the lovely things offered by the swiftly passing days. This attitude is a sane and sobered compromise—unwilling to see only the ugliest face of the world, refusing to take the opiate of compensatory faith, declining to postpone happiness to an unknown and incredible future. But it was, after all, a compromise, an ungrumbling resignation. These men had no better understanding of how the world might be made more fully satisfying, or how the good life might be won,

than the other religious groups who denied the world and escaped it on the butterfly wings of faith.

There is a reverse, dark side to the picture of religious ideals. Some religions, in which the moral evils of the world were associated with the perversity of the will of man, built terrible places of punishment for the wicked. In the earliest form of religions the linking of moral status with the condition of after-life existence did not appear. If there was any distinction in privilege among the dead, it was a continuation of their prestige in the group while living. In Vedic religion there was a heaven of happiness for the good, but no hell. In Zoroastrianism, hell is temporary, and all its suffering souls will be at last redeemed. The hells of Buddhism and Hinduism are triumphs of imagination. All the nightmares of all dreamers are there surpassed. Though terrible, they are transient. The way is always open to eternal bliss, and all the forces of the divine world labor ceaselessly to win the unfortunate wanderers from their doom. Only Christianity, Judaism, and Islam were willing, at times, to close the doors of hell upon the lost souls forever. Generally the spirit of religion seems to have weighted the balance on the side of ultimate victory and final happiness for all men. In building the future of his phantasy man could at least be generous.

The meaning of it all becomes clearer today. The peoples have been on pilgrimage along problem-littered paths, seeking the city of fulfillment. Though the

ideals of all religions had a common source in the unsatisfied hungerings of life, men were not often aware of their earthly origin. Nor were they conscious of changing ideals. The hedges of the present walled them in. Their picture of salvation seemed fixed and final, the noblest and only desirable future for man. At times a group might even claim to possess the one, only true way to the god-guaranteed goal. That the ideal of the good life has altered in quality and content, ever and everywhere, no one would have believed. Deeper understanding came only with the long vision of the world peoples feeling their various ways through the storm and sunlight of the centuries. The reasons for change, for fundamental similarities, and for peculiar differences in their ideals could then be appreciated.

They are alike in being projections of human hopes, man's best understanding of what is desirable in life. They are different because of the variety of the cultures out of which the ideals grew. They are always human, the full completeness of joy in a perfected, human nature. "I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand," was never the ideal of any religion. India spurned even the status of gods in quest of a higher goal, realization of the true self.

Usually the ideals unite joy with virtue. At the end of the long way the good man is the eternally happy man. The relativity of morals enters here to make a difference, but whatever may be the moral values of a

people, they are embodied in the character of the individuals who attain the life of bliss. Usually but not always. In the religions of salvation by faith, the line through moral merit to eternal blessedness is sometimes short-circuited. The character of the individual is not the determining factor. His status is dependent upon the merit of the Savior. Even in such cases the moral conscience of the community always challenges the right to slight the common code. The Indian bhakti groups, the Amitabha sects of Buddhism, and evangelical Christianity answer the challenge by compromise, each in its own way. That salvation may be secure, it must never depend upon the work or merit of man. Still, the saved man ought to be moral.

The controlling world-view of an age is always reflected in the religious ideal. This accounts for progressive change in the projected goal of an historic group as well as for many of the differences among religions. Some hope only for the realization of values in this life; some wait for a future golden age of this world; some are entirely other-worldly or world-transcending. In some religions, salvation belongs to the nation or society rather than to the individual; in others the salvation of the individual is all-important. Sometimes a happy after-life in heaven is simply a continuation of a vigorous and victorious life on earth; sometimes, for discouraged and disillusioned peoples of advanced civilizations, it is a lotus of hope emerging from the murky waters of despair. Wherever there

is distrust of the world, or of human life, or of human nature, immortality becomes significant, for then the soul may find happiness in another perfect life. When a God could guarantee such a future eternally, the situation was simple. But an immortality of an endless rebirth on the wheel of reincarnation, with no God able to break it, and no heaven untouched by transiency, made the Indian situation more complex. It was necessary to go beyond immortality to the eternal nature of the soul. Where there was no hope of happy life beyond the death shadows, men glorified the virtues and joys of comradeship. These were élite souls endowed with tough-mindedness and an aristocratic status. Despair of victory over the evils of the world led usually to the appealing logic of the larger hope. It was more alluring to the majority of men. But a naturalistic world view could permanently inhibit its rise, as is evidenced in the Confucian literati.

Our modern ideal is stripped of many of the qualities which characterized those of the past. The great religions were all of them absolutely certain that the good life was grounded and guaranteed in the ultimate nature of the universe. By loyal coöperation with cosmic purpose, which they could know, the whole community of men might find peace and happiness, spiritual worth and fullness of life, here and hereafter. This principle was common to them all, no matter how differently it may have been formulated. Their hopes were supported by perfection behind the events

of time—the order of nature in China, the eternal nature of the Self in India, the all-enfolding Dharmakāya in Buddhism, the battling god of Iran, the omnipotent Ruler, whose purpose threads the world in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Citizens of the modern world have no such unquestioned assurance. Amid the present confusion and conflict of ideals, we contemplate wistfully the firm faith of yesterday. We are able no longer to place dependence upon supernatural revelation, or supernatural authority, or miraculous divine intervention. No longer may we hope for guidance from an infallible heritage of institutions, or books, or persons, or codes of past ages. Divinely qualified leaders either as priests, or aristocrats, or kings are no longer available. Old authorities crumble. The trusted landmarks drift. The god-man is merged in the crowd.

Nevertheless, the new age has thrilled to the exhilaration of another type of confidence. Ever since the Renaissance, there has been an increasing stress in the Western World upon the worth of man, on the values of this life, and an ever more daring faith in human powers. The Encyclopædists were touched with the enthusiasm of a new evangel. With the opening vistas of knowledge regarding the world and the multiplication of instruments of control, men have visualized the possibility of the progressive realization of the better society. The other world has lost its lure. We have turned during the last two centuries to the

hope of finding the satisfying life here and now. At times the new dream seemed doomed to end in cynicism, as one after another of the creative forces of modern civilization escaped the control of the human ideal. For if we should once more despair of the victory of the higher values in the structure of society, we could never again, with our modern knowledge, turn, as did our predecessors, to a dream world of the unknown beyond. That chapter of the history of religions seems to be definitively closed for thinking men.

The most disquieting phase of our problem is that so few, even of religious men, have yet understood the true nature of religions. For too many it still means some form of church or doctrine in which the living soul of religion has been crystallized, an organization in the world, yet in a way apart from it. Religion so conceived is honored but does not rule. The scepter of spiritual sway becomes a decoration. The real world of business and politics does not bow to the religious ideal. It is difficult to believe that a generation understanding religion in long perspective, as the quest of the ages for a good life shared in a good world, would be content to allow the instruments and techniques shaping modern civilization to escape its humanizing control. We suffer from the deflection of the ideal to another world during the ages of defeat. Today men possess knowledge and power. They do not wait for heaven. They deliberately undertake to change this world—to make it

yield satisfactions—for themselves personally, or for their own group. Loyalty and responsibility for the human cause are ignored. That the world can be reshaped to give the joys of living is unquestionable. It is being done—in spots—for a few. To do it for all men is the challenge of religion.

In the meantime there is conflict. It is the struggle of man for the satisfactions of the higher life against the rigidities of a civilization in which the religious ideal is not yet integrated. Human values are set over against mechanized industrialism, the demand for effective freedom against dominant power, the worth of personality against property, the right of free opportunity against privilege, democracy against vested control, intelligent, purposive change against intrenched authority of church or state or money, humanity against racial or national egotism and selfishness, practical human idealism against all static theories of the world, whether Calvinism or fatalism, materialism or Vedantism. This is the ancient quest in a new age. It is religion seeking again a living embodiment.

Greatest of all novelties is the fact that religions are becoming conscious of their planetary meaning. The religious philosopher of the twentieth century now feels a quickened heartbeat in contemplation of the brave questing of primitive man. He is able to survey the historic panorama of the ideals of the good life with sympathy and understanding. When he gives himself to the religious cause, he does it with clear

eyes, a realist, aware of the lions waiting in the way. He may feel a glow of emotion and a sense of dignity in being a bearer of a human hope as old as the life of man, but he knows that there is no short-cut to the joy of life. Not by resignation, nor world-flight, nor by accepting the universe, nor by scourging human desires, nor by compensatory dreams, nor by plunging from the springboard of thought into the shadowless deeps of the Absolute, nor by being borne in the arms of grace to a heaven eternal—by none of the old familiar ways may he now win through to the ideal life. All earlier ages assumed that the goal was sure as eternity, if man could but find the way. That faith was a sheet anchor for religions in the uncontrolled drift of earthly events. It is clear now that the city beautiful, harbor of our longed-for culture, must be reared patiently, stone by stone, through courage, devotion, and intelligence, by men for man. We can no longer put trust in miraculous transformations of character, either of the individual or of society. We have outgrown the willingness to accept salvation either as divine decree or as the donation of divine grace. Still more important, we would feel a sense of disloyalty in being saved alone. The consciousness of social solidarity has made us able to enter sympathetically into the life of our fellows, even at times across all racial bounds. The modern ideal of the good life must be social and inclusive in an entirely this-worldly sense. It is encouraging, therefore, and

of deep significance to religion, that a common refrain runs through the writings of modern thinkers. The notes of the melody are freedom, democratic opportunity, coöperating individualism, meliorism, internationalism. The march of religions moves toward the Great Society in which all individuals will have a fair chance for the joy of living, and personal satisfactions will blend with social responsibility and creative power.

Only in society is a worthful human life possible, but the happiness and sorrow of living belong to the peculiar sanctity of the individual. The good life is a personal experience. The living, cosmic process is channeled through time in individuals. These vital threads are woven into intricate interrelationships in a social pattern. And only the individual can know and feel its weal or woe. In all ages the ideal of the complete life has been securely cherished in the minds of philosophers and seers. In every age there have been some who knew, by experiencing it, the happiness of living. But a religion realistically grappling with the world must demand more. It will test society by its adequacy in mediating to every individual the opportunity to embody in life experience the values of the social ideal. What those values may be, when man shall have marshaled the resources of knowledge and material power to the service of the higher life, no one can now foretell. In such a culture and in human nature nourished by it, undreamed possibilities may lie latent. Simply

to generalize and develop the opportunities for the good life that now exist would yield a better world than man has ever known. The past idealized by moody modern men never was; the Utopias of passionate and prophetic rebels may never be. Could we but find a way to integrate in common human experience the cultural values now available, we need not envy the happiness of any heaven dreamed of in any of the religions.

First and fundamental in the elements of an ideal of the satisfying life must be the joy of secure at-homeness in the world. It is the oldest phase of the religious quest, reaching back to the elemental ideal of primitive man. He sought for food, shelter, sex satisfaction, security, and a recognized place in the group. These are the basic needs of living. Only as they are guaranteed, may man find freedom for the higher life of the spirit. Modest and meager as it may seem as an objective, in all our thousands of years we have not yet united the wisdom and good will necessary to make that kind of world. We may make excuse for the men of earlier ages with their too great faith in gods and too little faith in men, their ineffective tools and clumsy methods, their thraldom to authority and the inertia of ignorance, but there is no excuse today. Our slow awakening to communal responsibility will be a thing of wonder to more intelligent generations. Only to attain an adjustment to the material and social environment that would yield the economic necessities

of life, freedom from poverty and release from fear for the future, a reasonable mastery of nature evils, especially those which menace health, would change the face of the earth for millions of men. To be secure in simple, natural living would strengthen the age-old bonds which link man to the earth and unfold the fettered wings of his aspiration for nobler human values. With the earth really homelike and friendly, there might emerge a nature mysticism that would be the music of life.

A higher level is reached in the joy of personality, in full living as a sharer in the racial, cultural achievements. This involves a mediation to the individual of a fair chance for personal development. It means knowledge of the nature of the world and of man's place in it, an appreciation of beauty, participation in the heritage of the ages of human culture, ability to range in reverie along the highways of history, and to commune with the great dreamers in philosophy and art. It demands an educational discipline for poise and self-control, ability to think, and so to escape the unhappiness of slavery to prejudice, hatred, vice, and dogmatism, and the achievement of kindness and tolerant sympathy for people through understanding. This much at least an effective education might give to the normal member of the race. But in a projected ideal, we would ask for more, for the ability to do creative work and to feel the thrill of adventure in the presence of a problem. There are men who combine

in themselves all these things. They are wise, lovable, calm, winsome. For such men of understanding, life is good, and even could they be no more than spectators of the drifting years, each day would bring them its reward. In them the possibilities of human nature are revealed. Still, we cannot now be content to see the cosmic process culminate in the production of a brilliant company of "philosopher kings." The religious ideal holds a more generous hope. An aristocratic galaxy of men like gods, smiling from the heights of Olympus upon the antics of the milling multitudes below, is not the final goal. In loyalty to its vision, religion must include the multitudes and at least try for a democracy of great individuals.

Nearer to the hearts of all men and very precious, whatever may be the height of personal attainment, is the joy of happy human comradeship. The hearth fire was ever a sacred symbol. When all other hope died, the flame on the altar of friendship could still warm the world with meaning. On intimate, personal contacts with the companions of the way the happiness of human life depends. The laughter of little children, the memories of home, the dreams of youthful friends, the loyalty of co-workers, shared devotion to a cause, have significance because we are wrapped together in a community of life. Our sorrow flows largely from the tangling and disorder of the bonds of human relationships. When prophets of religions thundered against injustice, selfishness, tyranny, cruelty, conflict

and war they were moving on the level of reality, seeking happiness for man. When the moral ideals of the religions exalted love, sympathy, loyalty, justice, brotherhood, and peace they sketched the outlines of a social order in which blessedness might be realized. Worthy and recognized personal status in an ideal group was the promise of happiness in the old religions. They talked of a heavenly home, a communion of saints, a holy city, a society of liberated souls, a brotherhood of man, a kingdom of God. Man knows no higher goal. Modern religious leaders are more practical, yet they move toward the same ideal, the perfecting of human relations by the solution of maladjustments. Satisfying, personal contacts are prerequisites to a good world. A society of free, creative, cultured persons in harmonious coöperation would know life's noblest happiness. That time of high attainment is not yet, but the circle of friendliness a purposive social idealism may know how to enlarge. Feeling fully the togetherness of men in the earth's adventure, our age, at last, at least may lighten the path of pilgrimage with mutual sympathy and kindly care.

We may hope still further that the many will share increasingly in the joy of creation, in the expression of personality in some activity of value to the common life. The growing planet feels its way into the future through creative minds. By the curiosity of the scientist, by the more inclusive apprehension of the poet

and artist, the cultural store is enriched. In laying the reins of human control over nature, in molding material to the service of life, in making machines to lift the load of labor from the shoulders of men, in the nobler task of lifting civilization into forms of cultural beauty, there is the thrill of achievement. It is sufficient now to enlist the energies of the best intellects of the race. When creative power shall feel the spell of loyalty to the quest of the ages and find its larger reward in integrating the ideal of the higher life in social forms, the troubled childhood of the race will be past.

These four phases of the ideal of happy living are not mutually exclusive. They blend into a single picture of a reorganized society. They are merely prolongations of beginnings that already exist. But it is one thing to project an ideal; it is another thing to actualize it. The world-denying, heaven-questing religions of the past are witness to the seriousness of the problem. Men found the way to heaven because they failed to find the good life on earth. They plodded patiently through earth's tribulations in calm content that some morning's light would unfold before them the towers of the eternal city of peace. It is useless to envy them. If religion fails now, the doors are closed forever upon the former compensations. The everlasting arms of the Absolute grow nebulous. The dear, strong gods keep watch no longer within the shadows. The torch of science has fired the walls of heaven. And,

by a stroke of irony, the same science, busily applied, has made our modern problem of social living a maze of Minotaur. But religion need not fail. In our hands are power and knowledge and method adequate for victory. Failure will mean only one thing—that we have betrayed the quest of all the ages.

Chapter Eight

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY, OLD AND NEW

THE modern temper is revealed in the religions of all peoples by the disintegration of the traditional authorities. The clear quiet voice of complete assurance characteristic of the past is rarely heard. Defenders of the sacred norms talk angrily, betraying their growing uncertainty. Modernist apologists say both yes and no, but their meaning is that the ancient sources of infallible guidance no longer give clear light, even for those who would gladly follow their leading. "Thus saith the Lord" is a figure of speech, not a theophany. The life quest of man is finding new embodiment over the whole world. Integral to the abandoned past, the old authorities reach out their dead hands in vain to control the active present. They are still revered, but they are ineffective. The religions of today are in search of a new authority, practical, and consonant with the age of science.

In the past man found many methods of safe guidance. Some of them are summarily dismissed by sophisticated moderns as superstitions. It is an unkind word which fails to take account of the groping nature of early religions. Anxiety regarding the future, help-

lessness in the presence of unknown powers, pathetic eagerness for good fortune, lack of knowledge urged man to grasp at any promise of wise leading. He trusted that in the unseen world of the spirits and gods was the wisdom and knowledge he so much desired. A son in trouble, sleeping on the grave of the father who had counseled him in life, hoping for guidance in a dream, makes a picture human and natural. Dream revelations in the temple of a god, on the grave of a saint, or at the shrine of an Oracle are only an elaboration of the simpler form. Akin to it is the prophetic vision born of brooding under deep emotional strain.

Discovering the way through divination took many forms. The fire markings on a deer's shoulder-blade, or on a tortoise shell, the flight of birds, the neighing of horses, casting of lots, the markings on the liver of sheep or swine, were all mechanical means of reading the mind of the invisible divine or cosmic powers. Thinkers sometimes rationalized such primitive gropings. The elaborate divination philosophy of the Chinese Book of Changes, the *Yi-King*, may have had its origin in the simple practice of casting lots by use of the stalks of the milfoil.

A more elaborate mechanical device was astrology, which attained almost the dignity of a science. It was based on the idea of an inevitable relationship between the movements of the stars and the life of man. There were two phases, the Babylonian and the Roman. In

the former the movements of the heavenly bodies were correlated with extended observation of the happenings on earth. Divisions of the heavens were allotted to the great gods Anu, Enlil, and Ea. Other gods were identified with the sun, moon, and planets. The changes in their relationships indicated, to one wise enough to read the heavenly writing, approaching events of good or ill on earth. Rome added a philosophic idea to this simple scheme. The universe was conceived as a vast organism in which every particle was involved with every other in a constant interplay of influences under a fixed law. The characteristics of old gods and mystical personages were assigned to the stars and constellations bearing their names. In such a universe of ordered movement it was possible to forecast the fate and future of any individual. Casting of the horoscope as a means of guidance for one in doubt or difficulty was a trusted method even into the Middle Ages.

All the authorities most revered in religions were grounded in a dualistic theory of reality. The realm of truth and perfection behind or above the world of fact and appearance was the sole source and guaranty of safe leading. Rising above defeat in the life of actuality, religion created the invisible, compensatory existence as a divine dwelling-place of ideal values. For all later generations, accustomed to look beyond the world, authority rested in revelation, mediated from above, through specially qualified men. Angel mes-

sengers soon disappeared. Theophanies ceased when the gods drew away into the quiet of eternity. But all the religions found elaborate means of authenticating their teaching and guaranteeing their plans of salvation by reference to revelation from the unseen. Philosophy followed theology and tangled itself in the interminable weavings of logic and epistemology in search of a truth eternally true. Naïveté, made metaphysical, has charmed even the elect.

Some men were especially inspired. In the simplest form of dualistic thinking, the individual might really be possessed by the invisible spirit being and speak authoritatively under that influence. Such inspiration might be induced by the ecstatic dance, or by drugs, or intoxicating drinks. In religions of culture, the qualification of the prophet or teacher came from a special relationship to the divine, either through a more complete embodiment of the spiritual essence of reality, or because he was selected by God to be his spokesman and representative. Through such men revelation came. In some religions it was necessary to reinforce the message by proof of the authority of the messenger. This was the function of miracles. Whatever lifted the prophet above the human status gave greater certainty to those who trusted him for salvation. The pathos of man's hunger for happiness in a troubled world is there. Around about the great mediators of divine revelation the faith of their followers wove myths of marvelous deeds, of supernatural birth and

superhuman power. The eager desire to be sure made belief easy.

The theory of all sacred scriptures is that they are revelations and therefore authoritative. Though they came to man through men, they were believed to have a value transcending time. Bibliolatry was not uncommon in the past. The Adi Granth of the Sikhs still ranks as divine in its own right. But there is a great variety in the status of the holy books in the religions. The Confucian classics know of no divine revealer. Rather, they embody the wisdom of sages who knew how to orient human life to the order of the universe that peace and happiness might dwell among men. In the same way, the Buddhist scriptures have value, not because a God speaks through them, but only because they teach the way of blessedness. "The scripture is no more nor less than the finger pointing to the moon of Buddhahood. When we recognize the moon and enjoy its benign beauty, the finger is of no use. As the finger has no brightness whatever, so scripture has no holiness whatever. The scripture is religious currency representing spiritual wealth. It does not matter whether the money be gold or sea shells or cows. It is a mere substitute. What it stands for is of paramount importance. . . . The Canon is the window out of which we observe the grand spiritual scenery of spiritual nature. To hold communion with it we must get out of the window. It is a mere stray fly that is always buzzing within it, struggling to get

out. Those who spend most of their lives in the study of the scriptures are religious flies, good for nothing but their buzzing about nonsensical technicalities. On this account Rinzai declared, 'The twelve divisions of the Buddhist Canon are nothing better than waste paper.' " (Kaiten Nukariya, *The Religion of the Samurai,* q. by McGovern.) Zen Buddhism was more extreme in this attitude than other groups of the faith but even when a particular book of the Canon was exalted as the very embodiment of the truth, it could never be the basis of dogmatism. The truth was there to be apprehended by free minds.

Lack of dogma did not mean lack of certainty. Men were confident that the sacred books spoke from the divine world. In Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda gave the Gathas of the Avesta to the prophet and later traditions claim for them a truth high above all other revelations because they contain divine and perfect wisdom. The same claim was made for the Vedas by the orthodox teachers of India. The ancient rishis who were the authors of these books were more than human, and consequently the teaching revealed through them was pure and untainted by error. After the Vedas and Upanishads, Indian religions produced an unparalleled body of religious literature. All groups were sure of the truth, but interpretation was free. If not in behavior, at least in belief, India found the fortunate combination of an authority adequate for faith and complete tolerance.

Hindu souls were solitary, in lonely freedom walking the karma paths of the ages until they won the great release. Gods might be companions of the quest; they were not dictators. It was very different in the religions of Semitic origin, where God commanded through revelation and was interpreted by priest, or church, or creed. The sacred book became much more important. It revealed not truth only, but the will of God, and God's will one might not accept, reject, or interpret at pleasure. To disobey was sin; to misinterpret was danger. Thus a religious authority through revelation, which gave an absolute assurance to those who could accept the official interpretation, was often a cause of sorrow to men who denied its claim. Believers had no doubt that God spoke to them through the Book. Through the centuries, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have justified and certified ideals and behavior by means of the sacred text.

A moderate view of the Torah in Judaism is expressed in the famous creed of Maimonides: "I firmly believe that all the words of the prophets are true. I firmly believe that the prophecy of our teacher, Moses, was a prophecy in the truest sense of the word, and that he was the chief of the prophets, both of those before him and those after him. I firmly believe that the Torah, at present in our hand, is the same that was given to our teacher, Moses, peace be to him. I firmly believe that this law will not be changed and that no other law will be revealed by the Creator,

blessed be his name." Orthodox Judaism attributed divine authority to every word and even to every letter of the law, and traced back to the revelation on Sinai not only the Torah, but also the interpretation of the rabbis. History dictated the stress. The Torah, elaborated in Halachah and emotionalized in Hagadah, saved a broken and scattered people from being merged and lost among the nations. It included both religious idealism and culture. Because Jahweh spoke to them in it, commanding "Be ye holy, even as I am holy," they were able to keep hope, courage, and dignity even in the darkest days of the dispersion. The law was constantly adjusted to new knowledge and new conditions. Methods of interpretation were often fanciful, even fantastic. Priestly legalism threatened at times to submerge the creative life of the religion, but throughout, the authority of revelation was unshaken. Kabbalists and Mystics, even, clung to the letter of it. Greek philosophy did not replace its authority in the minds of the rationalists. The pride of Israel in divine guidance is still evident in the words of a modern, brilliant theologian of Judaism—"While Christianity and Islam, its daughter-religions, must admit the existence of a prior revelation, Judaism knows of none. It claims its own prophetic truth as *the* revelation, admits the title Books of Revelation (Bible) only for its own sacred writings, and calls the Jewish nation alone the People of Revelation" (Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, p. 41).

Not less certain were the Christian groups of the divine word in their Holy Book. The churches were earlier than the New Testament and in the conflict of opinions deliberately selected the Scriptures, later called infallible, from many others which were Christian. Assurance was made doubly sure. To the authority of Scripture was added the infallible interpretation of a divinely guided church. When Protestantism repudiated the authority of the Roman Church, the Bible held the field alone, as the final guaranty of truth and revelation of the will of God. In spite of the fact that an infallible Scripture was read in conflicting senses by different Protestant groups, all guided by the same Holy Spirit, there was no serious challenge of the Bible as authority or as revelation. On this point, historic Protestantism would probably agree with the Westminster Confession—"The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but upon God (who is truth itself) the Author thereof: and therefore it is to be received because it is the word of God." Under the shelter of that security, Christianity has met the changing eras. Only the other day, the universe was cozy, God was near, his will was clearly revealed, and his official interpreters could guide all willing souls. Of that old authority, there is left for the modern world only a memory and a shadow.

Latest of the great religions, Islam also trusted the

authority of a Holy Book. Moslem claims for the Koran are the most extravagant of all. The faith of the simple believer did not falter before the theory that the Scripture was uncreated and eternal. The orthodox intellectuals held the heavenly original only to be eternal; the earthly copy belonged to time. The philosophers evaded the difficulties by distinguishing the external word from the internal interpretation. For all, the Book was the word of God. The latest English translation, done under Moslem direction, is prefaced as boldly as ever—"Verily it is certain truth." "We know that not only has no other Scripture ever advanced the claim of being a perfect and final revelation of the divine will as the Quran has done, but further, that every religious Scripture revealed before the Holy Quran has undergone alterations in the course of time: and the Holy Quran is therefore the only book that can be a true guide for an ever advancing humanity (*The Holy Quran*, p. xcii., q. by Widgery, *Comparative Study of Religions*, p. 63). But the most sacred book is unable to escape the destructive influences of the modern world. Rationalists and modernists, in Islam as elsewhere, find it impossible now to be so certain of the authority of scriptural revelation.

Even infallible Bibles need interpreters. While sacred books were honored, even to the point of worship, their authoritative status was illusory. The effective authority was in the social group of official in-

terpreters and their interpretations, claiming divine guidance, were actually dictated by the knowledge and problems of the social situation. The Torah in Judaism became a practical guide for life, through the Rabbinical interpretations to meet the needs of successive centuries in altered situations. By the time of Maimonides there was need of a guide through the maze. The simplification by Joseph Caro in the Shulhan 'Arukh of the sixteenth century became an authoritative code for later generations. In Judaism, the Responsa literature is clear evidence of the demands of the social situation upon interpreters. The problems of living have always enlisted the intelligence of recognized leaders for real guidance, though their decisions were rationalized, even to themselves, in terms of the authoritative law. The same thing was accomplished for Catholic Christianity by the tradition, the decisions of Councils, and the authority of the living Church. Protestant Christianity found it necessary to interpret the will of God revealed in the Bible by manifold confessions. In all of them, the influence of the cultural situation in the discovery of the doctrines is evident.

It is still clearer in Islam. There, the religion of a simple Arab culture came suddenly face to face with the old rich cultures of conquered kingdoms. Situations unprecedented arose, for which the revelation of the Koran made no provision. Yet the Koran and Mohammed were authoritative. The problem was solved, in

part, by recalling what the prophet had done and said, from which inferences might be drawn in the novel case. Thus there grew up the Sunna and Hadith as guide for behavior. But this was not enough, and the official religious leaders resorted to analogy, Qiyas, to solve problems. In situations where all these failed, and life flowed into forms of conduct quite different from the pattern of the past, the authority of Ijma confirmed the new way. Ijma is the consensus of capable interpreters and is based on a saying of Mohammed—"My community will not be agreed in error." Confidence of divine guidance came through the prophet and Book, but real guidance in crucial situations came from the responsible leaders of the group.

In lands like India, where religion held its control over the whole social process, the influence of the group was more clearly recognized. According to the Law Book of Manu, authority for the guidance of life was found not only in the Vedas, and the tradition, Smritris, but also in the practices of those who knew the Veda, in the customs of holy men, and in the rules of castes, guilds, and families (Manu II:6; VIII:41, 42, 46). Like all other Scriptures, the Vedas were an infallible source of truth, but what was found in them depended upon the period and problems of the people. These very ancient books, modernized through interpretation by the present day Arya Samaj, teach ideas and ideals which would have been incompre-

hensible to the simple priestly singers of the sacrificial hymns.

It is only a step to the modern insight that the sacred Scriptures have no ultimate authority apart from the religious life that produced them and that each age of a living religion has read its own new meaning into the text. The interpretations made the holy writings fit the religious outlook and knowledge of every later generation. When the Bibles were thus read through the accepted creeds of the changing religions, the infallible divine element was in practical reality removed from the Scriptures and vested in the interpreting body. When they were interpreted allegorically, they could mean a multitude of contradictory things, and the authority of the books as revelation became a mere shadow. The historical interpretation is simply a conscious facing of the fact that the Scriptures are creations of living religions. They may therefore serve as one of the auxiliary means of understanding the religious life of the age in which they were written and used, as the later interpretations indicate the vital interests of each new situation. Their authority as revelation disappears. And the authority of interpreters who would revitalize the text to meet the needs of the modern world is no greater than their ability, through intelligence, to guide their fellows in the solution of practical problems. It is quite unnecessary to read the solution into sacred writ and then discover it there. Finally, the claim of a special group to prerogatives in

the apprehension of the truth beyond the reach of other equally intelligent men will hardly be recognized by any outside the group itself and their uncritical followers. The leadership of experts is excellent and necessary, but their qualification will depend upon wisdom and method, not upon an unquestioned authority flowing from divine right.

The survey of the religious authorities of the past reveals two things—first, that they were ways of feeling sure of life values through a connection with whatever was thought to be the eternal and perfect reality behind the change and uncertainty of the everyday world; second, the guaranty and security were formal and emotional only, since the actual meaning and content of revelation were drawn, in every concrete case, from the intellectual and cultural milieu of the age. Revelation was only a means of reinforcing the best wisdom of man.

As the Scriptures were constantly reinterpreted, so also were the great prophets and saviors. Emotionally they were very important, claiming a complete loyalty. Actually, they were repeatedly transformed into symbols of the ideal and embodiments of the truth, with the content changing through the centuries. The historic figures were lost in the interpretations, and each succeeding change of meaning repudiated those of the preceding age. Buddha and Christ, Krishna and Mohammed, Moses and Zarathushtra have been permanent symbols of the growing truth and changing ideals

of the developing religions. The "Back to Jesus," "Back to Mohammed," "Back to Gautama," "Back to Zarathushtra" movements of the liberals of today are in line with the historic habit. The modern human and naturalistic spirit is being read into these great names to give force to the social idealism of the new age. As a symbol and star for men groping their way through uncharted paths, the figure of the Great Person has given needed assurance. But from this source there can be no finality or authority for modern religions. The inspiration of the prophets was human and social, a bright flame arising out of life's frictions. They were revealers of truth because they were close to the earth, and sensitive to the troubles and tensions of their society. The explanation of their message is found in the social problems, the thought forms, stresses, and crisis situations of their cultural environment. We realize that the "eternal truth" of the prophet was always relative to his age. And although the reasons may not come clearly to consciousness for most of us, it is no longer practical to reinforce modern ideas with the authority of ancient names, nor to take the "truth" of the past as a guide in the complex situations of a world so vastly different, nor to expect to hear in the streets of a modern city the voice of a living prophet commanding awed attention with his "Thus saith the Lord." We have lost the prophet-revelation habit.

The authority of mystical experience appears at

first glance to have a different value. Other authorities were public. This belongs to the solitariness of the personal life and has been all-sufficient for many individuals. The mystic in every age escaped the limitations of formal religion. He did not need to bow to the authority of the priest, or Scripture or institution for assurance in his religious life. His methods of meditation or Yoga technique brought him into immediate union with reality and gave him an unshakable confidence and peace. He was perfectly at home in the universe, and in a way beyond all understanding or intellectual explanation, sure of the truth of his religious ideas. In India, the technique of the mystic experience was developed as a practical part of religious training. After the individual had been thoroughly instructed in the faith of the group, the meditation discipline, with its ecstatic sense of union, gave a final assurance of truth. In Buddhism this experience was the final step in the Noble Eightfold Path leading to salvation. The Sufis of Islam and the Christian mystics knew well the bliss of ecstatic union and the stages of the way. For all mystics everywhere the experience was the same. Treated purely as a psychical phenomenon, there is no difference. The unhesitating assurance of their interpretation of the reality they touch in mystic intuition is common to them all. But the interpretations are widely at variance. For mystics may be atheists, or pluralists, or theists, or pantheists. There are naturalistic mystics, and there

are mystics who are trinitarians. The conclusion is inevitable. The truth the mystic finds is exactly what he has accepted from his social and religious environment. Mystical states are purely subjective. They bring no news from another realm of reality. Their value lies only in giving a warm glow of security to whatever religious world-view the individual may hold. So long as belief remains firm in a supernatural realm from which revelation may come, the mystic will be certain beyond all possibility of doubt, that his insight and joy flow from the divine world. But Gautama Buddha was content with the calm bliss of the experience itself, ignoring the existence of gods. The Hindu idealists found in it the true nature of the Self. Any hope that authority for modern religion might find a last refuge in mysticism has no foundation. The wisdom of the mystics is only the social wisdom suffused with emotion. The technique may be a powerful means of intrenching conservatism. It might even serve to yield æsthetic happiness in the experience itself. But man's quest for the good life must seek elsewhere for trustworthy guide and authority.

All this long narrative serves to illustrate once more the way in which the world peoples, in conflict with evil, troubled by uncertainty, reached out for help to the invisible. The action was circular. Long-forgotten ages had loaded the unseen realm with the perfection of the longed-for ideal, and later generations drew from it authority for their own under-

standing of truth, and their own vision of the goal. The social situation was the source of both. Gods and Absolutes became what man could never on earth attain and then in return guaranteed man's highest ideal.

But now it is evident to all observers that the authorities of traditional religion no longer carry conviction. The media of revelation are silent. It is not that our age has been trained in the religious sciences, and is therefore generally aware of the natural history of religions. In that case we would not be so confused. Groping among the ruins of the old securities, we moderns would follow a guide as trustfully as any age of faith, if we could. The plethora of preying cults is evidence. Science wears a halo and is worshiped without understanding. When a great scientist announces that there is no conflict between science and religion, the statement is accepted with pathetic eagerness, without demanding why specialization in physics or geology gives competence in the materials of religion. In the old days of infallible authority, religion did not need to beg for recognition and condescending approval. But the intellectual atmosphere has changed, and all the efforts of modernist intellectuals to treat the ancient authorities as though in some obscure way they were still valid, ends in futility. Reading new content into traditional authorities is an old habit, very familiar to the student of religions, but it lacks frank-

ness today, when not only the historic meaning, but the revelation authority itself, is challenged.

All the more on that account, we need in modern religion a trustworthy authority which may hope to command the assent and allegiance of all intelligent men. If there is no such authority, every program is doomed to be merely a personal view. There can be no common vision, no agreement as to the goal, and no coöperation in the means of attaining it. We may speak of the authorities of the past as pre-scientific. We may agree that they lack compelling sanction for modern life, but for our predecessors of the world religions they were the guaranty of many things. They assured both world-view and life-view, gave guidance in behavior, consolation in defeat, and a calm confidence that beyond the unsatisfying present was a future of perfect fulfillment. It is true that, looking backward through the eyes of the religious sciences, we can see that the peoples really blundered their way, buoyed by hope, through waste and sorrow. We understand that the prophet was the voice of social distress, that the mystic found his interpretation of his revelation in the social milieu, that the Scriptures were human products filled with new content of meaning by each succeeding age, that sacred institutions won their authority by recognizable human means. The reference was to the divine and extra-human realm; the wisdom for guidance was man's. When religion becomes thus self-conscious, authority can mean only one thing—

an intelligent and trustworthy method of directing the quest of the ages by a practical program to the attainment of selected goals. For such a task we have now an instrument—the method of science. Moreover, it is the only authority which may hope to command the loyalty and coöperation of thinking men.

Scientific method in religion is a new thing under the sun, growing out of a modern understanding of the nature of religion in the history of the race. There are many, however, who still feel that it is incongruous to link religion and the method of science. This is inevitable so long as a local and narrow phase of one religion obscures the view of religions. The long vision of the human quest is essential. If religion were simply a commerce with the supernatural, which could only be transacted through specially qualified persons and institutions, or by means of mystical technique, it would be meaningless to talk of scientific method. If the plan of an ineffable, divine will is inevitably weaving itself through history, there would be always an imponderable beyond the reach of knowledge, and the only attitude possible would be faith grounded on agnosticism. It would be necessary then to say that the realms of science and religion are incommensurable. Moreover, if religion in its essential character were fideism, æsthetic emotion, worship, quietistic Yoga, or mysticism, there would be no need to search for new methods. The traditional technique is holy

with age and adequate for such service. That we should think these things the essentials of religion indicates how sadly we have failed in understanding the meaning of man's quest as revealed in racial story. Certainly religion developed as a very practical thing. The needs of living men nourished it. The coöperative efforts of human groups to achieve the satisfactions of life in the presence of an unmastered environment gave it characteristic form. The ideal was not vague and ethereal. Early societies of men aimed at concrete goals. Religion has always sought the good life in a world made good. Lack of an effective method of realizing it wove the thread of tragedy through the tale. Man's ignorance and the slow accretion of custom led him to put his faith in magic technique, in ceremony, in communal ritual, prayer, and spell. Lack of knowledge and his fear of ever-present danger, known and unknown, made him seek security within the sacred circle of protective rite, or behind the barrage of apotropaic words. Ignorance of the natural world, coupled with compelling desire, urged him to build, in the line of his hopes, the compensating all-guaranteeing, supernatural realm of the gods. Refusal to abandon the ideal in spite of heartbreaking earthly failure, led him to project it beyond life to another world or to a future age. No religion has ever had a method of building the good society on earth, or of integrating the higher values in social organization. Religion today, taking up the historic task, consciously

facing the problem which turned the religions of the past to other-worldliness, may find in the method of science an effective technique.

The method is already effective in action on the social level. It has almost become a popular habit of mind to believe that the factual world can be shaped by the purposes of men. The higher values are being won, in a measure, by a few. But the religious ideal is inclusive. The goal is a society in which personal happiness and the joys of culture may be available to the masses of men. World-denying and discouraged religions waited for God to give the final and perfect consummation. It remains to be seen whether man, bearing responsibility for the task, can, with his new instrument of analysis and direction, actualize it on earth.

Scientific method is simply a deliberate and objective way of thinking. Conflicting purposes and complexity of problems in social living make necessary an intelligent method of adjustment in the light of a selected ideal. In a flowing world of changing events there can be no final solution. There never have been finalities. We know that neither in world-view, nor in program, nor in the content of the ideal have the religions of mankind remained fixed over very long periods of time. Relativity rules everywhere in actuality. But change has often meant waste and suffering. The desirable thing is to escape maladjustment and blundering by a trustworthy method of finding the

way through the interlacing network of facts. There is every reason to hope that the method of science may be the effective guide and authority for the religious quest. For there is nothing nebulous and ghostly about the materials of religion. Religious problems are social problems; religious values are values of the common life. Religious experience is human experience. The task of religion is not something separate from the task of the sciences. Ethics, art, politics, economics, natural and social science, education and philosophy, are special strands of the same thread through the serviceableness of which alone the religious pattern of life can be woven. Lacking the loyalty of the scientists with their specialized knowledge, the human quest for the good life is doomed to continue its zigzag blundering through the years. The hope of realization lies in the method of science applied to specific problems, in specific situations, by men alive to what religion means.

In religion, however, the weight of old attitudes and thought forms is heavy upon us. The dualism of primitive man, rationalized by ages of philosophic and theological thought, still asserts its influence and makes it difficult for us to feel perfectly at home in a purely natural world. The tendency to bolster our hopes by supernatural sanction, by the authority of mystical experience or revelation dogma, is a pattern of ancient experience. Arguing many years ago for the method of science as the only way of fixing belief

so as to coincide with facts, Charles Sanders Peirce remarked, gloomily: "The method of authority produces marvelous works. For the mass of mankind there is probably no better method than this. If it is their highest impulse to be intellectual slaves, then slaves they ought to remain" ("Fixation of Belief," *Popular Science Monthly*, XII, p. 9). Beneath the impulse is ingrained habit, planted and nourished by education and the social mores. The identification of religion with belief is another phase of it. Out of the same dualistic complex came the long and wearisome warfare of words over epistemology. From these clinging enfoldments of the past there is no escape by logic. Only a scientific understanding and appreciation of the origin and history of religions, revealing the function of ideas, the sources of dualism, and the nature of traditional authority, can give emancipation. The method of science thus clears the ground for its own effective leadership.

It has long ago become habitual for educated men to think naturalistically of the material and biological phases of the planet and to apply the method of science for analysis, description, and control. The realization that the evolution of moralities and religions is also natural, integral to the planet, and due to the ceaseless interaction of human beings with developing desires and purposes, is more recent. So long we have been accustomed to seek the guaranty of our social, spiritual values by attributing them to a superhuman

realm that, for many people, it seems to lessen their worth to treat them as purely natural. The same persons who worship at the shrine of natural science are chilled when the hand of science lays hold upon the materials of religious experience. It is not uncommon to find brilliant, natural scientists who are dogmatic, or biased, or credulous where religion is concerned. The conclusion is not that the social and religious sciences have not arrived, but that some scientists, outside their narrow specialization, are uninformed, unscientific, and naïve. The panorama of the age-old quest of the religions of the earth lies plainly before our eyes, but the view is too novel to be completely appreciated. More deeply rooted in cosmic processes than the transient creeds and philosophies and institutions is the driving hunger of men for the goods of the satisfying life. Religious behavior is only human behavior in the search for shared values. When this is clearly realized, intelligent direction may take the place of blind and trustful dependence. Trained and responsible men will use the effective tool. The authority of scientific method in religion will be finally won by demonstration of its efficient leading, through problems and evils, to satisfying adjustment.

It is impossible to predict what the nature of the scientific technique of religion will be, in its diversified form, related to the manifold problems. Acceptance of the method of science in itself would produce an immediate change. From it would flow a new attitude

toward all doctrines, customs, and institutions. There would be an expectancy of change, as new problems and conditions appeared. There would be tolerance as a matter of course, for scientific method knows only a democracy of facts. No data could be snubbed, submerged, dismissed, or taken uncritically without challenge. Bias and prejudice are also facts and would be so listed. Fortunately for serious minds, a bias recognized is a bias sterilized. With the drag of the old inhibiting authorities released, there would be an end of dogmatism and rationalizing. Both ideal and program would grow out of the analysis of human experience and human problems.

The scientific method is the same in all fields. It is therefore a bond of union among thinking men. The use of it varies with the materials. Social facts are exceedingly complex, so that in the materials of religion the application of the method of science is more difficult than in the natural sciences. But it is already being effectively used in large areas. If we are to have for the modern world a secure religious authority and a safe guide, there is available no other source. It offers a means of accumulating facts, of analyzing social situations, of finding the way through problems, of projecting ideals and discovering the social organization capable of embodying them. By this method may be maintained a world-view for each succeeding age grounded on what is known of the nature of the world and man. Guided by its analysis, man may

formulate soberly the ideal of the satisfying life, not as a form of compensation or anæsthesia, but as a temporary goal to be won. The program of religion would flow from it as the practical adjustment of social activity calculated to make possible the values visualized in the ideal. Thus the method of science would give to men all the certainty and security provided by the sacred authorities of former times, and in addition be free from rigidity and intolerance in its results, since a characteristic of the method is to keep all the windows open to new knowledge and altered situations. Moreover, instead of consolation there is a chance for realization, since scientific method is, in practice, an intelligent way of guiding a purpose to its goal.

The religions of the world are today feeling their way in bewilderment through a revolutionary age of transition. Is it too daring to expect that they will try for the new technique? It is possible that many religious people will be able for yet a long time to rationalize the traditional ways, and will still prefer to take refuge from an unsatisfactory world in the compensatory yonder-land. It may even be possible that the priests of religions will be least likely to favor scientific practicalism. Probably many social idealists will prefer not to contaminate their effort to realize social values by identifying that activity with "religion." It may be that some who are disillusioned will greet with smiling indifference the hope of actualizing

the unrealized dreams of the defeated ages. Certainly there are an increasing number of men, loyally devoted to the ancient cause, who see that unless religions actually build on the basis of scientific method and scientific knowledge, with a serious determination to face the facts of evil and the problem of making the dreams of religion come true, religion in its present form is ultimately doomed. Rationalizing an outgrown theology, reinterpreting a pre-scientific technique, and apologizing for anachronistic institutions may be carried too far in an age that is trained in the scientific attitude, and expects to use all available tools to win a desired goal. But religion, holding true to the quest of the ages, served by the sciences and infused with scientific knowledge, may hope to give meaning and synthesis to life, and to lead the creative workers in all fields to loyal coöperation in the realization of shared human ideals.

Chapter Nine

THE PRACTICAL PROGRAM OF RELIGION

RELIGION is the mother of dreams. Over the gray world, ruined by deluge and death, it has sought ever, and found, the arching rainbow of hope. The vision of the good life lured man on to struggle through trackless barrens of privation and hardship, and consoled him even in the valley of the shadow of death. This was the function of the prophets; they kept the beacons of hope burning. There was a beautiful futility about these high-souled dreamers. They knew how to die for their dream; how to wed the ideal to the actual they did not know. The cruel brutality of facts beat them down. The old customs of routine folk-life flowed over them, and succeeding generations made pilgrimage to their tombs. They are the best beloved of the sons of men because the human heart cherishes the hunger for the unattained ideal. Religions cling to it. Through thousands of years they have preached the ideal of the good life, and with remarkable unanimity selected the noblest values of human social happiness as the content of it, and always have failed to find the practical program to embody it in the world of fact. They distrusted the

world, and trusted God so much that they could confidently hold aloft the torch of the ideal and wait.

The ideal still lives, but the modern religious philosopher is sobered by responsibility. The religious quest of the ages unfolds before his eyes, challenging him to take up the task, while at the same time he is robbed by modern knowledge of all the comfortable securities and easy faith of yesterday. His weary shoulders feel no more the support of an everlasting arm. There is for him no infallible guide to eternal truth, no assurance of a "far-off divine event, toward which the whole creation moves," no Absolute as refuge from the bewildering welter of relativity and change. The urge which drives him to action is the same as that which moved the ages before him—the desire for human satisfactions. But life grows more complex with each generation and the problem of organizing the social relations of men to yield the joys of living becomes more difficult. At the same time, there is no escape in pure idealism, nor by the time-honored trust in the transforming allurement of persuasive words. The task is practical. The good life for the many waits upon the good society, and the program of religion, to be effective, and not simply another dream, must be a way of organizing the flexible social structure which will produce the individuals capable of giving it intelligent direction and, by their coöperative creation, make available the values of the good life. This is the responsibility settling upon the

shoulders of modern religious men, and it is staggering. The test of the cosmic-human adventure lies here. It is easy to weave world-views with the niceties of dialectics. It is delightfully simple to build with wishes and hopes the divine city of the ideal. All religions have done these things for ages. The practical program for actualizing the ideal baffled them all.

The task is to impose human purpose upon the cosmic process, to shape the course of the flowing stream of life with its millions of conflicting drives, so that it will converge toward the practical expression of creative idealism. The task is to put plan and the direction of intelligent purpose into the future history of man in society; to release the creative powers of men in a friendly world dedicated to the beauty and joy of living; to make of the social and natural environment a satisfying support, stimulus, and guide of the human individual. But the philosopher of religion knows too well the tenacity and obstinacy of existing custom and habit. He is faced with the existing facts of religions, hoary with ages of history in practice and in institutions, with ancient civilizations of compounded complexity, with vested interests in all areas of social life in all lands determined to maintain the *status quo,* with emotional attitudes woven into the texture of life and buttressed by ignorance, with ancient dogmas that for multitudes have become part of the foundation of the universe.

It is reasonable and true to fact to say that man in

his social organizations is the growing point of planetary life, and that, conscious of responsibility for directing the social process toward the perfecting of human living, he should use intelligence and scientific method for the making of an even nobler future. It appears in a different light under the shadow of titanic skyscrapers at a crowded intersection in a great modern city. This is the symbol of the infinite complexification wrought by the ages of cosmic evolution. Is it too late now to give unity of purpose, of ideal, and program to this maze? The giant buildings are not inert. From them reach out arms of communication linking the world. China, India, Africa are bound by invisible bonds to the destinies of dwellers in the cities of the Americas. Behind the weaving streams of individuals moving at the beckon of automatic signals down the imprisoning streets, is an endlessly diversified social network. Beggar and plutocrat jostle each other; gunman and priest touch elbows and pass; the ignorant and the intellectuals, the virtuous and the wrecks of passion, dreaming youth and broken, disillusioned old age mingle together here. The driving desires of life are channeled in these human embodiments in a thousand patterns of attitude and behavior. In the background are the social groups and institutions by which they have been molded, and behind them again the commingled heritage of many cultures. A vision of the faces of the crowded street is enough to check the smiles of easy optimism. So few laugh a glad accept-

ance to life; so many, even youthful faces, are marked by old evils—sickness, anxiety, sorrow, or defeat. Yet everywhere, enveloping them, are the sounds and signs of man's mastery, the labor-lifting machines, the marvels of technology, clear evidence of comfort and control beyond the imagination of the most highly placed of the aristocrats of early centuries. For the modern city is differentiated from all the past by its rich attainment in wealth and power, potential bases and promise of cultural creativeness and beauty of living. But power here outruns intelligence and possession exceeds capacity for enjoyment. Disparity and difference are more evident than understanding and unity. The conflict of wills, maladjustments intensified by complexity, lack of any sane and harmonizing purpose threading the tangle of swiftly whirling events—these are the elements of the picture that give concern to the practical idealist. There is no consciousness of common will, no vision of a human goal challenging to loyalty.

A cosmic process has come to consciousness and to capacity for purposive self-control on the social level —this is the word of the philosopher. Groping through the ages in the quest of the good life, man has made his religions to embody and support his hope, and now is equipped with knowledge, power, and method, to assume responsibility for making the religious ideal a reality—this is the word of the philosopher of religion. But all this, unfortunately, has little meaning

for the millions shuttling in the loom of the workaday world. Neither the idea nor the responsibility commands their behavior. Our generation will blunder as wastefully, driven by desire and unsatisfied longing, as the ages past, unless the new religious synthesis of life can find a practical program for orienting habit and custom and institution toward the ideal.

The problem is intricate and difficult, but the solution is not as hopeless as it appears. So long as the problem of religion remained in the realm of dialectic, an effort to preserve the eternal security of a long-lost theological world-view by rationalizing, the best intellectual leadership in religion was diverted from the practical task. When theologies and traditional institutions are seen to be transient, and peripheral to the main quest of religion for the values of the higher life, energies of intellect and emotion will be released from bondage, recruited anew and devoted to the construction of a living unity of ideal and program. To be challenging to modern minds, any such religious synthesis must be practical and not merely a fairy castle of words. A practical program aiming at concrete goals, tested and perfected in action, would begin the modern religious orientation of mankind. Conceived on a cosmic scale, the task of religion may appear overwhelming, but in actual fact it is simply the solution of problems piecemeal.

The world of today knows nothing more familiar than man's success in imposing his will upon the

flow of events. No time is wasted by the man of affairs in anxious speculation regarding any supposed metaphysical controls and rigidities in the universe or in human nature. He changes the face of the earth and alters the habits of man. If reality, in its natural and social forms, may be molded to plans imposed by groups inspired by self-interest, there is every reason to hope for greater success when, in the interest of the commonweal, the religious ideal descends from the clouds and takes the form of a practical program for the removal of evils, and a progressive advance toward a world organized to guarantee the goods of life. In spite of the inertia of existing religions and unsatisfying civilizations, mankind everywhere has been persistently striving to gain the worthier values of existence. When ways are discovered by means of which the concrete satisfactions of human living may be attained, the ancient patterns of thought and behavior offer no ultimately effective obstacle. It may be difficult to persuade a Moslem to accept Christianity as a surer guaranty of future happiness than faith in Allah, but Moslem and Christian alike can appreciate, and gladly welcome relief from economic distress and security from war. The Persian peasant may reject the Christian salvation, but eagerly adopt new ways of making the social life happier through sanitary and engineering science. When missionaries invaded the Greek orthodoxy of Cyprus with churches and preaching, they met with violent opposition. When they

built schools instead of churches, and offered education, training in practical arts, and scientific farming, they found a ready welcome. The urge to the good life is more fundamental than any of its traditional, religious embodiments, and religion, as a program for the amelioration of the ills of society that life may be lifted to nobler forms, has a chance to win, however conservatively intrenched may be the existing structure of religion.

There is further encouragement in the fact that all the religions in the world are adrift. Liberal leaders are awake to the necessity of finding a new religious world-view and a new social order. The past has been shaken everywhere. Willing or unwilling, the historic religions must meet the issues of the changed world or die. They can no longer lumber along in the ruts worn by earlier and different ages. They have been rudely aroused to realize that in the sacred charts of the fathers there is no provision for the problems created by scientific knowledge and by a civilization industrialized. The saga of the machine moves to a new, rough rhythm. In India the intellectuals have been compelled to abandon their aloof individualism and quietism. The sufferings of the masses in the world of dusty fact call for healing that hymns of the eternal cannot give. China enlists her educated leaders in the Renaissance. Turkey substitutes social idealism for the antiquated controls of Islam. In America, religious groups "interfere" in business and politics. Modernism

is a world-wide movement, and the problems have the same character in all lands. The quest of the long ages is becoming factual. A religious idealism, making earnest in its program with the issues of life, will find not only constructive criticism, but willing co-workers, in every race and religion of the modern world.

For many, the most substantial ground for hope lies in the new instrument, the method of science, which has won so many victories in the last two centuries. After fifty years of testing in the historical materials of religion, the method has been developed to give safe leading without doing violence to the facts. The advance of method in the social sciences inspires confidence that intelligence may replace drift and blundering in human relationships. Ability to analyze problems, to understand attitudes, to clarify the tangled interrelations of facts, may make possible a rearrangement of existing things and conditions more favorable to human hopes. The drive of human nature for satisfactions, material and social, is as vigorous as ever. It is now, as it has always been, the motive power behind religious ideals. The ideal was often extravagant and practical technique was wanting. Then it frequently happened that desire turned an ascetic face toward the world and came to rest in the comforting arms of a Cosmic Guarantor of all good. The thing needed and lacking was an intelligent method of selecting specific goals and formulating the program of realization. The surest hope of success for a modern pro-

gram lies in the very fact that it may be practical and practicable.

A detailed survey of the intricate patterns of the religious technique of the past is impossible in this brief sketch. It belongs to a world that is lost and in all its forms is now infected with change. The religious adventure of mankind is entering upon a new path. Groups that have been sleeping for centuries in the comfortable security of holy routine are shaken into activity by the rough hand of necessity. When both world-view and program are challenged, novelty is inevitable. There is such striking contrast between the traditional technique of religion and the methods of modern social idealism that some observers announce the passing of religion. Whatever it may be called, it is the same old quest for human values that all the centuries have known. In our age the ancient ways appear quaint, and archaic; in their own native past, they were charged with meaning and power. The cult of any religion is composite, a gradual accumulation deposited by the flowing experience of centuries. It presents a colorful combination of magic, practical activity, methods of securing psychic peace, rituals charged with emotion, mystic meditation and prayer. From primitive man to high ecclesiasticism, the details are infinitely varied. The important thing is that they were pre-scientific methods of achieving values.

Some practices were the result of primitive emo-

tional responses in times of crisis. Established as group ritual, they evoked emotion in their observance. They gave power. War and hunting dances were such simple forms. Other examples are the sacred dance of illumination, seasonal festivals, rain ceremonies, group singing, processions, an endless array of patterns embodying emotion. A large class consisted of magical technique for overcoming dangers of the environment—gestures, attitudes of the body, rites of purification, amulets, exorcism, curses, and spells. Like the curse and spell, prayer was an emotion-driven expression of a wish. When the gods became the great givers, prayer no longer acted directly. It was mediated through them. The growth of the gods and the supernatural realm made a great difference. Worship, asceticism, many forms of sacrifice, spiritual exercises, and other means of securing help and guidance from the unseen, outweighed in importance the methods of practical mastery. When religion snubbed the world of everyday events to seek the higher values in the beyond, a division of secular and sacred began to open. The divine technique became more holy, requiring specially consecrated priests. The secular technique was practical but emancipated from any necessity of loyalty to the religious ideal. Much of the social sorrow of mankind sprang from that dualism.

Bridging the gulf between the two realms of reality stood the sacred institutions, mediators of truth, and guarantors of the technique for attainment of the

perfect life in the future. Sangha, synagogue, and church performed the same function, though they were very different in the nature of their authority, in organization, and in philosophic theory. Their task was to shepherd the masses along safe paths to salvation. In some religions there was one only way. In others the program was adjusted to the capacities of the individual. For the intellectual there was salvation by knowledge; for humbler folk salvation by works or by faith. The ceremonies and practices of the technique of salvation were the heart of religion for all the discouraged and world-weary civilizations, since the good life was beyond life. Once established as the ideal goal, the realm eternal or the golden age, or the state of bliss, laid their lure upon all the generations. The vested interests of priest and institution gave dignified support. In this technique there was no means of mastery of the world for the welfare of men.

The ceremonies of all religions include rituals to give confidence and comfort in the crises of life—birth, purification, initiation, betrothal, marriage, and death. This group illustrates the tenacity of folk-ways, for the rites in their original form belong to the beginnings of human society. They are symbols of the cement of the social order. Care of the dead, education of youth, respect for authority, protection of the family were involved in them. The religions of India and China still exert a powerful social control through them. Roman Catholicism appreciates their worth. In

some religions they have been attenuated to empty forms.

Very significant for religion were the great persons —prophet, teacher, and savior. They vitalized the cult. Art and poetry were inspired by their deeds. They stood at the center of the structure as symbols of the highest truth and noblest ideals. The attitudes of the people toward them were of inestimable importance for behavior. Buddha, Zarathushtra, Confucius, Moses, Christ, Mohammed, Krishna, were, and still are, identified with the finest ideal in thought and practice of the religions centered in them. Sacred books drew their sanctity from them. The passing centuries added new meaning and richer values. Interpretations changed with the changing world views, and the function of the great person in the religious program has varied. Whatever the interpretation, they were the truth-bringers, the saviors of the people. Sometimes they revealed the will of God, as in Judaism and Islam. Sometimes they taught the true status of man as in Lao-tse's Taoism, in Jainism, Vedanta, and the Sankhya. Buddha and Confucius were human teachers of the true way of living. The glory of Gautama and Mahavira of the Jains was, that they embodied their truth and became splendid examples for all men to follow on the road to release. The saviors who gave immortality in the mystery religions not only demonstrated their victory over death by dying and rising again from the dead, but furnished the mystic tech-

nique by which all initiates might join them in the immortal life. Sometimes the savior was the vicarious rescuer of men as in Christianity, Amitabha Buddhism and Vaishnavism; Christ saved from the effects of sin, Amitabha and Krishna from the karma bonds of existence. In all three, salvation was by faith, effective through the merit and grace of the savior. Thought and emotion centered upon these glorified and idealized personalities until they became the soul and symbol of their religions. The attitudes and symbolism associated with them are still very important in the living religions of the world. Their names have been identified with the ideal values of the successive generations. Today they are being modernized once more. Their influence lives after creeds and ceremonies crumble. A realistic religious program, claiming loyalty, will need to take account of their place in the heart of the folk.

Religions in the past were very sure of the truth and equally convinced of the efficacy of their technique. Both rested firmly on the rock of unchallenged authority. Even the lowliest believer could point the way to the life of perfection. Today the wisest philosopher is uncertain of the path. This is a great gain. It imposes upon modern men the necessity of formulating a program attuned to factual knowledge and to the problems of the age.

Better still, the long adventure of the religions now

stands out in clear perspective. There is no longer any reason for mistaking a temporal and transient episode for the controlling theme of the story. From a central point of vision, the religions of mankind may be seen winding their ways along the centuries from the dawn days of savagery, through the rise and ruin of civilizations, through glory and tragedy, until they converge in the modern era. The unsatisfied longing of men, trained to social living, was the driving power; the goal was a happy home of hopes fulfilled. Art, statecraft, industry, and technical skills were specialized means of winning desired values. It was religion that gave them synthesis in the ideal of a good life. It was religion that continued monotonously to demand of earth and heaven the realization of the ideal. Thwarted in the present, religion claimed the future. Defeated in time, it challenged eternity. The whole universe was harnessed to the car of human hope. Truth, beauty, goodness, and perfect joy waited beyond the final march of man's pilgrimage through history. So, made over-bold by faith, the age-long quest flowed into many forms. The universe was wrongly read. Too often the world beyond robbed this world of meaning, and the religious program was plain futility in practical effect. But now, stripped of all grandiose dreaming, religion challenges modern men to continue the unfinished task, to direct the social evolution of the planet that the values of the higher life may be made available to all.

Seen in its planetary significance, the program of religion loses its narrowness and provincialism. The world peoples draw together. After ages of separateness the common goal of their long questing becomes clear, at the same time that science announces the solidarity of the race, and the new age of machines blends the destinies of the nations in interdependence. The organization of society for the good life will need now to include humanity. "The problem is a world problem," says Rabindranath Tagore. "No nation can find its own salvation by breaking away from others. We must all be saved or we must perish together." Solution of a primary and fundamental problem, that of guaranteeing economic freedom and security, without which a modern religious ideal dies aborning, involves the transcendence of all national and cultural limits. The joy of living belongs to the personal experience of the individual, but it is possible only in society, and the problems of any social group today widen to include inter-class, inter-racial, international, inter-religious relationships and interactions. Viewed realistically as the orientation of the interlocking social structure of the world to yield the values of the good life, religion might furnish unity of ideal and program. Certainly all narrow groupings, geared to the world-view and problems of yesterday, are helpless to give effective leadership. Their authority, theology, and salvation programs belong to an age that is dead. Denominational and sectarian divisions carry

on by inertia, confusing the vision of the task and dividing the energies of men. The issues of religion are being settled outside, in the workaday world. It is significant therefore, that the strategists in the churches have turned away from denominational housekeeping, to lead the forces of social idealism. It is still more important that the leaders of the great religions are escaping the bonds of tradition to wrestle with world problems in a practical way. After so many ages of other-worldly wanderings, the religions return to seek the good life on the earth.

If the practical meaning of the religious quest were generally understood, there would be an immediate and insistent demand for a new orientation of our powers. That we have been so long patient is a tribute to the effectiveness of our training. Mankind has been schooled in renunciation by the defeated religions of the past. Unhappiness and evil were transmuted into good by the anæsthesia of compensatory future consolations. Men learned to be patient in an unsatisfying world, because they trusted "good would be the final goal of ill," and that in some inscrutable way a beneficent purpose marshaled all human things the righteous way. These were wish fulfillments easily accepted by authority. They made rational the thwarting factual flow of events. When all this is clarified by the natural history of religions, and man assumes responsibility for putting purpose and providence into the social development of the evolutionary process, it

needs no prophetic wisdom to predict that all the specialized instruments of power will be claimed as servants of the shared life. There would be a kind of baseness in selfish betrayal of the common cause. But religions drawing their power from a divine source, and confident of ultimate guaranties, have been unable to give orientation to the forces which shape the practical life of man. Religion in the new age will seek a synthesis of the sciences in the service of human ideals. It is too late now for vested interests and divine rights to hope to maintain special privileges against the socially recognized common good of humanity. Moreover, it is only common sense that government and industry should be integrated in a program for the realization of the good life, if intelligence can show the way. Scientific knowledge and the products of science, machines and technology, might then be used, not merely for the multiplication of material things, and the aggrandizement of the physical scaffolding of life, but as aids to the release of the spiritual potentialities of men. Instead of segregating these marvelous new powers for the exaltation of a small privileged class, incapable for the most part of justifying their status by living the life of spiritual aristocrats, an intelligent idealism will direct these energies to the enrichment of the shared social culture.

But it would be a fatal fallacy to think that there is anywhere an all-embracing program waiting to be applied in the everyday world. The ideal of the good

life may be a guiding star, but its practical meaning depends upon concrete situations. A program to be effective as an instrument of reorganization must be precise and specific, growing out of the social facts. This is the work of specialists, and it means, not a program but programs, adjusted to the complexity of the changing flux of a social process always on the move. Neglect of the vital link between the ideal and its embodiment in behavior is the explanation of the ineffectiveness of the beautiful idealism of the old religions. They put too much faith in the magic power of words. The noblest ideals of human relationships are not modern. They have been known and preached in the great religions for thousands of years. But practice lagged woefully behind. Christian missionaries to Oriental peoples felt it necessary to differentiate Christianity from the civilization of Christian lands. Christian scholars apologized for the failure of the Christian gospel in a war-devastated decade on the ground that the teachings of Christ had never been tried. But why not?

The fallacy of faith in the preaching of truth as the cure of the world's ills is not peculiar to Christianity. The Buddhists of the far East met in Tokyo in 1926 and resolved to propagate their faith in Europe and America, "whose civilization is responsible for the existing confusion in the universe." Beneath the evils of capitalism, imperialism, and excess of materialism they found the egotistic passions of men

which call for the Buddhist cure. "The modern world is living in the expectation of salvation; and Buddhism alone can bring it salvation. Many remedies have already been tried without results. Socialism has not cured the evil of capitalism, nor anarchism that of imperialism. Before seeking to suppress all these effects, would it not be wise to think of destroying their causes—avarice, hatred, and lust? The teaching of the ancient sages like Confucius, or the precepts of prophets like Jesus Christ or Mohammed, are no longer sufficient in our epoch because they are no longer listened to, and the religious beliefs of the Christians and the Mussulmans have been shaken by the discoveries of science. In this skeptical world, Buddhism alone is able to bring forward positive truths. . . . The teachings of Buddhism tend to a universal brotherhood" (*The Bangkok Times Weekly Mail*, September 26, 1926). No scholar will dispute the beauty of Buddhist teaching, nor the nobility of Buddhist ideals; but the Western World is not in need of ideals. It is the practical technique for actualizing them in modern civilization that is lacking, here and in the Orient.

There is no single and simple program. To find the paths through the complex problems it will be necessary to enlist the trained abilities of specialized men of science in loyalty to the vision of religion in its modern meaning. The way must be discovered by trusting intelligence dedicated to scientific research. Then we may follow the paths on whose charting all

competent thinkers can agree. In a world of social patterns so intricately interwoven, the hope of creating a society in which the satisfying life may be attained depends upon the coöperation of all the sciences in the light of the common ideal. This means austere, objective, and ruthless science, but scientists challenged by responsibility as bearers of an age-old quest. In some such way, abstract ideals claiming only emotional loyalty may find concrete expression through ideas as programs of behavior.

The crucial problem is that of coördination and synthesis of our knowledge and powers that the culture basis of the good life may be enriched and democratized. Now, as always, reality sprawls into new complexity of growth in all directions. The flow of cosmic change still lacks purposive control. Thousands of creative workers in the sciences are laboring in their narrow cells, with little appreciation of the bearing of their findings upon the total human situation. Not only our interests but our knowledge has been atomized. There was a time in many cultures when religion made the synthesis of all phases of social activity. There was a time in Europe when theology was the queen of the sciences. But it would be vain to hope that institutional religion in its existing form may become the coördinating mind of the modern world. Yet the good life is the goal of religion. When the fulfillment of human life is recognized as the central quest of the ages and its success

or ultimate failure in the hands of man, it is inevitable that intelligent idealism will seek some organized unification of social structure as an instrument of guidance. The elaboration of world-view and life-view, the solution of problems, the clarification of the right and the good, might conceivably some day command the services of the best intellects of the race.

In the meantime the peoples of the earth grope in the twilight between two eras. The authority of the past is fading everywhere and there is no civilization habituated to the method of deliberate and intelligent shaping of reality in terms of a growing ideal. For that, a generation of reëducated individuals is necessary. But individuals are developed in an existing society which must first be changed before such a generation can arise. If we could transform the social milieu we could produce the new individual; if we could produce the new individuals they would be the new society. The difficulty of this dilemma is partly relieved by the rapid tempo of social change in the modern world, which not only releases the rigid controls upon the individual, but offers opportunity for more satisfying social adjustment, if intelligence and knowledge were competent for the task. A scientific practicalism, aiming at making available to all the values of the higher life, might achieve a gradually rising level of progress, on the one hand, by the continuous, piecemeal reshaping of factual situations through analysis and adjustment, and on the other,

by development through education, of the individuals capable of carrying responsibility for the shared life. As a matter of fact this is the process already at work, but unevenly, too slowly, and without the coördination of a synoptic vision.

There is no chart of the future, nor can there ever be in a growing world. A method of synthesis of the necessary factual knowledge to furnish guidance in specific areas of social maladjustment is the essential thing. But our age is hesitant and somewhat bewildered. We have not yet become thoroughly accustomed to the responsibility of taking the helm of a planet. Our old world, rock-ribbed with eternal decrees, was much more secure and comfortable. There is no reason for dismay, if our sense of human togetherness is still feeble, and if we fumble rather clumsily with the new technique of tentative and experimental advance toward temporary goals. Many among us are homesick for the lost world. Perplexed and discouraged by the jangling disorders of modern life, sensitive intellectuals are calling for a return to the old religion. But there is no return. The path goes forward and through, or there is an end. Fortunately, the hope of building the good world still lives. The thrill of sad contemplation of tragedy on a cosmic scale is not for this generation. Heralds of a naturalistic idealism in religion are not voices crying in the wilderness. They are not prophets of the to be, but reporters of what is actually coming to pass. Resources for the enrich-

ment of life and man's power of control are greater than ever before in human history. Inspired by the new practical idealism, with, without, or in opposition to the old religion, works of social amelioration of innumerable forms are in progress here and in the Orient. Between three and four hundred international organizations link together, in understanding and co-operation, the peoples of the earth. Modern research, directed by experts, is opening up all areas of knowledge needful for intelligent guidance of the human quest. If a practical and realistic religion working with scientific method tempers hope with facts, that is a gain. If optimism yields to meliorism, that is better. And if one universal panacea of world salvation is replaced by thousands of programs directed by trained specialists, that is better still. Evils there are, many and menacing, old evils that have been companions of man's pilgrimage since the morning of the world, and new evils, indigenous to the new civilization, terrible with the powers of modern science. But the race was never so capable of facing them, as now. The time for gloom will come only when the ideal of the good life as a shared human quest is no longer able to enlist the loyalty of the best minds of mankind.

A modern religious program is a specific plan of adjustment. The primary responsibility of religious leaders is, then, the correlation, analysis, and coördination of the available knowledge bearing on particular problems. These cover the whole area of social liv-

ing, political, economic, institutional, and involve the facts of dissatisfaction, defeat, poverty, strife, and war. Effective opportunity for the good life depends upon their solution. Both idealism and force have been tried as instruments of adjustment, to no avail. The working program must be accepted, not imposed. For such reorientation scientific research is the basis. The purposive use of this factual knowledge for the release and fulfillment of human potentialities is, in practice, the meaning of modern religion.

Integral to the social task of practical religion is the production of the individuals capable of carrying naturally the laborious task of guiding the shared enterprise of living. Their world will have a different tone. It is difficult for us to visualize a society oriented to the ideal of the good life and accustomed to intelligent coöperation in the scientific solution of common problems. The development of such persons is the educational phase of our modern program.

Whether we shall be able to purify and strengthen the stock is problematical. We may learn how to guarantee that every child shall be well-born, and that each new experimenting unit of life, allowed to enter upon the adventure of living, shall have a full chance for development. Habituation in the art of successful and progressive reorganization of experience is the task of education.

With the passing of dualism and the religion of supernaturalism, the difference between secular and

religious education disappears. The separation of the two in the Christian West is an interesting episode in the history of authority. But when religion is intelligent participation in the human quest for the good life in a shared world, education for complete living is religious. To separate the two would be to rob education of a philosophy, and take from religion its most effective tool. In effect, education means ability to share in the human heritage of values, and capacity to create gladly new values for the common life. It involves ability to think, fearless honesty, tolerance, sympathy, expectancy of change, and an attitude of coöperation. Education means the production of a cultured, poised, creative, coöperating unit in a society which solves its problems in the light of factual knowledge, and shares its values. The ideal is a thinking democracy of diverse and colorful individuals. When we can educate thinkers we can afford a democracy—for democracy will then be safe from mediocrity. It could not be stampeded, and it would not submerge the creative individual.

In a modern program of social idealism, education would be a constant function of society in all stages of individual life, since the adult, specialized in his own field of work, requires to be kept constantly aware of the enlarging vision and ideal. Religion, seeking cultural and emotional enrichment of life, will find means to make the adult individual a citizen of the world and of the ages, in sympathy, understanding,

and knowledge, by an increasing appropriation of the cultural heritage of the past, by appreciation of the changing problems of the age, by repeated attunement to the world ideal, and the implications of the religious quest. Then intelligence, understanding, and action might blend in happy union.

The ultimate question is, who is to take the spiritual leadership of mankind? The logical leaders in this, which Professor Harry F. Ward calls "the experimental search for a new world," are the organized forces of religion, bearers of the ideal from the ancient past. The search requires the marshaling of the best brains of the human family. Backed by the resources of organized religion, fired by a new vision, challenged by the possibility of epoch-making achievement, the most brilliant intellects could be enlisted to analyze to the root facts the festering disturbances of modern society, to secure by patient labor a knowledge of the factors which control human behavior, to trace the origin and history of the habits and customs, ideas and prejudices, which weave the web of human relations. No single mind knows enough to unravel the tangled skein. Yet only on such a foundation can an educational and social program be built. To achieve that result, institutional religions might well exhaust their resources, for they would win the heart of humanity, and open the essential, practical way to the realization of the good world. In that quest of a new era, men

would transcend the historic distinctions of Buddhist and Muslim, Christian and Confucian, and become coöperating members of a common humanity.

We are witnessing either the crumbling of civilization under the weight of its material mechanism, or the birth of a new world organization with a spiritual ideal. No religion of the past has ever had sufficient knowledge of human nature, or of social control, to build a satisfying home for man. The failure was not acute through the long ages while life was simple and the lands of the earth were open. It becomes acute when life is tangled in snarled complexity in a narrow and preëmpted world. Primitive tools for wresting a simple subsistence and security from nature, at the touch of modern science become transformed into machines which weave the pattern of human society into new forms. All the ancient evils of human relationships, injustice, selfishness, abuse of strength, become sinister and terrible when reinforced by the vast increase of material power. Millions toil in the grime of cities at tasks in which they find no joy. The earth is saturated with the blood of helpless victims as the flag follows a thrust for economic advantage, seeking the control of material resources and the channels of trade. The soul of man cowers, starved and fearful, in the midst of a civilization grown too complex for any mind to visualize or to control. Masters and servants alike are bondslaves to the blind drive of production and distribution of goods. Joy and beauty

fade from human living. Yet life, abundant, beauteous, laughing life, has been our age-long labor's end. What other conceivable worth has the mastery of the material world, the exploitation of the resources of nature and the creation of wealth, except as a basis for the release of the life of the spirit? In spite of all its lamentable failures, religion has maintained as central this quest for the good life. For the first time in the history of man, there is available in the method of science an instrument capable of realizing the age-old dream. Modern religion, therefore, faces the task of subjecting all material resources to the ennobling and beautifying of living, of reorienting the social order toward the spiritual ideal, of releasing from bondage the inarticulate millions by an art of human life.

The troubling question returns, as to the source of the intelligence and good will to be the directing spearhead of the advance. For this generation, much depends upon the organized religious groups. As leaders and interpreters of religion, they wield a vast influence over the lives of man. Carrying the standard from the cloister and cathedral into the market-place and the laboratory, they—none more easily than they—could lead in the patient, piecemeal task of remaking the world. By focusing the inspirational power of a practical idealism and the accurate scientific knowledge of facts upon social maladjustments, the pattern of the religious ideal might be slowly woven into the warp and woof of civilization. A tremendous respon-

sibility rests upon the leaders of the organized religions of the world, for only a rebirth in new form can prepare churches and temples for such a task. Will sects and denominations be willing to die that religion may live through them? Or will they choose to cling to the old altars and die in fact, while youth, in a new and naturalized generation, leads on to the victory they refused to claim? For no witness of the march of the centuries dare doubt that the quest of the ages will find its leadership in the new world.

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